



F. Parr del.



F. Parr del.

THE
DEVIL *turn'd* HERMIT:
OR, THE
ADVENTURES
OF
ASTAROTH
Banish'd from Hell.
A Satirical ROMANCE.

EXPOSING,
With great Variety of Humour, in a Series
of Conversations between that Demon and
the Author,

The scandalous Frauds, lewd Amours, and devout Mockery
of the Monks and Nuns; the Intrigues of Courts; the
Ambition, Avarice, and Cruelty of Ministers; the In-
sincerity, Luxury, Prostitution, and Ingratitude of many pri-
vate Characters; with other Capital Vices of the present
Age.

Founded chiefly on real Facts, and interspersed with the
Portraits and Secret History of most of the considerable
Persons that have lived in *Europe* within these thirty
Years past.

Translated from the Original French of Mr
*de M***.*

L O N D O N:

Printed and Sold by J. HODGES, at the *Looking Glass*, over-
against St *Magnus's* Church, *London-Bridge*; J. RO-
BINSON, at the *Red Lion*, in *Little-Britain*; J. WILCOX,
in the Strand; and J. BRINDLEY, in *New-Bond-Street*.

MDCCKLI.

1607/2842.



ADVERTISEMENT
OF THE
TRANSLATOR.

THE Author of this ingenious and diverting Piece, if we may guess from some Passages interpersed in it, as well as from a Similitude of Style throughout the whole, is already well known to the World for Works of Imagination, and has had the Happiness to succeed in them beyond most others of his Age. This, at least, is my Opinion; but for fear I should be singular in it, I chuse not to point out the Writer; I mean because I am convinced, that if my Conjecture be well-founded, the particular Marks that led me into it will have the same Effect on

others. The chief Design of this Advertisement, is only to inform the Reader, that I wish I could have obliged him in one Thing, which perhaps he may often think wanting: I mean, a compleat Key to the Characters drawn in this Performance, the whole Satire of which, there is good reason to imagine, is personal. I could easily have done this to a great Number of the Portraits, the Originals of which are publickly known; but, for the very Reason that they are thus known, they want no Key at all; and I did not chuse to give one that would be imperfect, because I am in hopes the Author, whoever he be, will shortly present us with one himself. Then we may be able, as he advises in the Person of ASTAROTH, to compare all along the Pictures and Originals together, which we now can do in some Places; and be as well acquainted with his Capuchin Friar, as with his Sieur de TOLVAIRE. In the mean Time, there can be no Want of Entertainment in any Chapter of this Book; and perhaps there will be some Advantage in having one part of our Curiosity suspended, that when
we

we get this Piece of Information, we may return with new pleasure to the Conversation of our good-natured communicative Devil, whose Narratives are all seasoned with that Salt which is so peculiarly necessary in Works of this Nature.

T H E

The AUTHOR's

PREFACE.

DEAR Publick, I am extremely embarrassed. I am to give you an Idea of my Work, and know not how to go about it. Become an Author by the special Favour of Destiny, and, what is more, a diabolical Author; my Presumption, no ways inferior to that of all my Brethren, would almost incline me to give you a Panegyrick of this Book. If I followed this Inclination, which is usually unsurmountable among us Authors, perhaps, authorised by Custom, I should find the most pathetic Expressions, to make you believe that, since the Invention of Printing, the Press has never furnished any thing so fine. I should very naturally finish this Master-piece of Rhetorick by a
shor

short Period, to inform you, that this
 Production cost me but very little Pains,
 and, if I may be allowed the Expression,
 no more than the Trouble of setting down
 my Thoughts on Paper, in proportion as
 they arose to my Imagination. Doubtless,
 friendly Reader, you would not have be-
 lieved me. Yet I had fallen into this
 Fault, the favourite Vice of Writers, but
 for the Admonition of ASTAROTH, who,
 you may easily perceive, is not a Devil
 of the worst Sort. “ What are you
 “ thinking of?” said he, when I had
 communicated to him my Project.
 “ Learn that nothing is more insipid,
 “ nor more disagreeable to the Publick,
 “ than such kind of Prefaces where-
 “ in an Author praises himself : They
 “ are often dictated by Vanity, but often-
 “ er by a reasonable Apprehension that no-
 “ dy else will take the Pains of praising
 “ them. Besides, who does not know
 “ that every Man has his particular Taste,
 “ and judges of things according to his
 “ favourite Prejudice? Do we not every
 “ Day see the same Book that pleases one,
 “ tire another, and to a third seem utter-
 “ ly

“ ly odious? Such will be the fortune of
 “ yours. Diverting to those who read
 “ only for Amusement, it will contract
 “ the Brows of your Men of severe
 “ Morals, who pretend that their Taste
 “ ought to be universal, and that there is
 “ nothing good which has not their Appro-
 “ bation. But above of all, added he at dif-
 “ ferent reprisals, take care not to pre-
 “ vent the Publick in your Favour. That
 “ Custom, usual as it is among the Au-
 “ thors of your Age, is absolutely contrary
 “ to Common Sense, and favours more of
 “ the Quack, than the Philosopher, or
 “ the Man of good Sense.”

From this Reflection, which is not very
 diabolical, tho’ made by ASTAROTH,
 it results, that the Attribute of Devil, which
 we give him in the Title of this Book,
 signifies nothing more than a penetrating
 Genius, which, by long Experience of
 the World, has discovered a great many
 Things without the Help of Magick. In
 a Word, what can be more natural
 than to say what one knows, and relate
 what one has seen? All the Difficulty then
 consisted in giving such a Style to this
 Narration,

Narration, as is fuitable to Works of this Sort, and sufficiently merry to amuse the Reader. *Hic labor, hoc opus est*; and to this all the Work of the Author was reduced.

ERRATUM.

P. 54 l. 11, for *Plus voluit*, read *Deus voluit*.

ASTAROTH

TO THE

READER.

PRejudice, Reader, is a strange Thing: I speak it not at all to thy praise, but thou knowest it to be true. A mere nothing, against all the Rules of Equity, charms thee, prevents thee, offends thee, raises thy Resentment. Thou decidest often from Appearance only, and seldom on the side of Truth. Methinks, already, I see thee start upon viewing the frightful Title that my History presents, and hear thee cry out with Horror, Oh! the Devil! the Devil! 'Tis a Treatise of the Black Art, a Book that ought to be burned.—But have a little patience Reader; recover thy Spirits, and for once make use of thy Reason. Upon the Honour of ASTAROTH, thy Terror is without Foundation, and will blindly throw thee upon the Rock of Mistake. I know very well

well that you Men paint us under horrible Colours, as Fire-Brands of Hell, Spirits inclined to Mischief only, terrible Persecutors of all Virtue, professed Enemies to all human Happiness. Admit that we are so, and that we are sometimes described like ourselves ; it must be owned, at the same Time that we often look less like Devils in those Pictures than like Men. You would fain cast on us all the Iniquity of human Frailty : Man, to excuse his own Crime, pretends, from a fond illusion, to find in us the genuine Source of his blackest Actions. But this is a poor unprofitable Fiction ! The true Devil that hurts him is his own Passion. . However you may think of that, ASTAROTH assures thee, that for his part, far from attempting to seduce, he aims only to instruct thee. His Project is laudable and full of Charity. If it appears to thee an absurd Problem, that a Spirit of Falsehood should speak the Truth, read this Work, and judge of it for thyself ; look at his Sketches, his various Pictures ; compare them with their Originals, and thou shalt know them. All the World swarms with Crimes ; but thou wilt find here more especially those of the Grate, the Disorders of the Cloister traced to the Life. That is not all : It is the design of this Work that the Errors of an other should mke tee
samewat

somewhat the wiser. But I conclude this Address, which is long enough already : for after having given thee this charitable Advice, thou wilt own that I must needs be a good sort of a Devil.

THE CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

CHAP I.

A Gentleman in Love having lost himself in the Appenine Mountains, discovers a Hermit of a strange Specie. Who this Hermit is, and the beginning of his Adventures. Page 1

CHAP II.

Cupit Masqued: Or, the History of Sister CORNICHON, and the Marquis de St JULIN. p. 23

CHAP III.

ASTAROTH at Court. What he sees, and what he does there. p. 36

CHAP. IV.

Of the Occupations of ASTAROTH, as an Ecclesiastical Chancellor. p. 50

CHAP. V.

*New Sights which the DEVIL HERMIT was entertained with at the Court of *** p. 62*

CHAP. VI.

The unfortunate Lovers: Or the History of Don BERNARD, and Madam URSULA. p. 85

b

CHAP.

[ii]

BOOK II.

CHAP I.

*Sequel of the History of Sister CORNICHON.
ASTAROTH the Duana of a young Lady of
Fifteen.* p. 101

CHAP. II.

*The Stratagems of Duanas: Or, the History of
the Count de BELAIR, and JULIA de St
FLORENZO.* p. 106

CHAP III.

*Sequel to the History of the Count de BELAIR,
and Miss JULIA de FLORENZO.* p. 118

CHAP. IV.

ASTAROTH, a Mendicant Friar. p. 125

CHAP. V.

*ASTAROTH, chief of the Grand Signior's Eu-
nuchs. The Tragical end of the Brother Ques-
tor.* p. 138

CHAP. VI.

Intrigues in the Grand Signior's Seraglio. p. 146

CHAP VII.

The History of ZARA and JULIAN CORNARO.
p. 157

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

*The Chevalier treats ASTAROTH Ill, and for
what Reason.* p. 166

CHAP. II.

*The virtues of the Scapulary: Or, the History of
Father CASIMIRE, a bare-footed Carmelite.
The Deliverance of ASTAROTH, who dis-
enchants the Chevalier, and lets him see his
Mistress in all her Deformity.* p. 176

CHAP. III.

*The Author makes his Peace with ASTAROTH,
who informs him of some remarkable Facts, and
gives him a great deal of Advice. The Au-
thor follows that of returning to his native
Country.* p. 183

CHAP. IV.

*The Author is transported into the Capital of the
Universe. Changes that had happened during
the time he was absent. He meets with an
Adventurer, whom he knew formerly, and
who tricks him of a good part of his Jewels.* p. 193

CHAP. V.

*Difficulties the Author is left in, through the
Knavery of the Marquis. To get out of them
be*

He is obliged to sell his Equipage. The Condition he is reduced to, and his Resolution to quit Paris. p. 208

C H A P. VI.

The Evening before his departure, the Author has a Vision, which obliges him to go the next Day to the Palace of Luxembourg. His Rencounter with ASTAROTH there: The several Conversations they have together, and their concerting a new Ramble. p. 212

C H A P. VII.

Idea of the Author. By the Advice of ASTAROTH he deceives his counterfeit Friends, sells his false Jewels for good ones, and sets Holland. A description of that Country. p. 239

C H A P. VIII.

Sequel of the preceding: Conversations of the Author with ASTAROTH, concerning several Persons, whom they meet by chance. They pass thro' divers Cities. ASTAROTH is forced to take his flight into another Country. p. 247



THE
DEVIL HERMIT;
OR, THE
ADVENTURES
OF
ASTAROTH,
Banished from HELL:
The FIRST BOOK.

CHAP. I.

A Gentleman in Love, having lost himself in the Appenine Mountains, discovers a HERMIT of a strange Specie. Who this HERMIT is, and the Beginning of his Adventures.

ENGAGED by an itch of travelling to ramble thro' the most considerable places in Europe, I came into Italy at the end of the year 1736. I had already for two years wandered from province to province, and
B from

from city to city, when my poor delicate carcase, fatigued by these long journies, was of a sudden seized with an acute fever, which, after many remedies taken, left me in a languid condition, and a very troublesome misanthropy.

My soul, clouded with sorrow, looked wildly about her, without fixing to any object. I was then at Bologna, a city agreeable and voluptuous, where the fair sex is neither unhandsome nor unkind. One day lolling carelessly on a window, I beheld a young lady, whose beauty and magnificent dress equally struck me. The gallery in which she walked was near the chamber I lodged in. This amiable object awakened all my senses, and made me assume some foppish airs, which she took notice of. A charming smile, with which she repayed my reverence, gave me the courage to enter into conversation with her. My politeness pleased her, as her wit charmed me: insensibly I offered her my heart, and she promised me her esteem.

Her very easy behaviour, which *however* was nothing but the pure effect of her education, filled me with ideas, and those ideas led me a great length: in a word, I persuaded myself it might be easy to conduct this HELEN to Paphos, there to offer incense with her to VENUS.

Such is almost continually the error of young persons: they persuade themselves that the civilities of a lady are the forerunners of approaching victory; they form projects upon her honour, without considering that there is often
found



found in that sex a virtue and constancy proof against all the snares of love. Deceived by appearances, I built many castles in Spain: But all these chimerical edifices vanished away, and nothing was left me, as the fruit of my pains, but a violent passion that had like to turn my brain.

Mean time the idea of my future happiness made a prodigious change in my person. From that very moment my effeminate face resumed its former colour; my languor left me, and the inquietudes of love took place of my indifference. This metamorphosis gave me charms: but I admired those charms myself alone, while my mistress took no notice of them. For two months together I had played the part of Don QUIXOT wondrously well; I had made use of prayers, tears, sighs, and all in vain. Amorous even to madness, I formed the noble resolution to throw myself headlong into the sea, and was musing on the execution of this fine project, when I was diverted from it by the arrival of a monk, who came luckily to my assistance. It was a fat mendicant, young and jolly, to whom I regularly gave charity every week. Perceiving the sorrowful plight I was in, he, with continual teasing, and making a thousand harlequinades, obliged me to discover the cause of my chagrin. These sort of people in that country are very charitable; it is with regret they see a man burn with a fruitless passion for an inhuman creature. Mediators of the fair sex, they know perfectly how to bring to-

B 2

gether

gether an amorous couple. As they love propagation extremely, and are not alone sufficient for all the operations of that great work, they believe it is for the interest of human kind not to let so many lovely creatures remain useless, and therefore furnish them with means for avoiding the scandal and curse of sterility. Their high employment gives them every where admittance, and they know all the corners and nooks of a city. Crafty to the last degree, they so dexterously act their parts, that they are admired by all the female republic. But their labours are worthy of reward; without paying them well, it is in vain to hope for good fortune.

This Mr SANCTITY, informed of the source of my illness, burst out into such a laugh, as at first put me in a passion, and scarce could I forbear making him feel my resentment! Gently, good Sir, (cried he in a kind of fright, seeing me ready to curry his hide) a little patience if you please! I was never in love with those blows, and therefore pray compose yourself! These words had not been sufficient to appease my resentment, if the good father had not added, that he had an infallible way to make me beloved by her who was the cause of my torment. His whole quackery, however, consisted only in making my purse fifty crowns lighter. Charmed with his promises, I made him the present with infinite joy: the hopes of approaching happiness were more dear to me than all
the

the riches in the world. Could any thing be more extravagant?

The forceries he was to employ to make me happy were mere trifles in themselves: but the venerable and sacred inquisition regarded them with another eye. In the country where I was, one must not play with the ceremonies of religion. This specific philtre consisted of a little puppet, and some consecrated wax, taken from the paschal taper, with a formulary of prayers almost like that of St JULIAN. It is certain I was neither hypocritical nor superstitious; but the violence of my passion had blinded me to that degree, that I executed literally all these mummeries for more than five days together. What a fool does love make a man! However, seeing that neither pagod nor prayers produced any thing favourable to my passion, quite sick of the farce, I threw both idol and formulary into the flames. This just indignation preserved my liberty: two hours after came the emissaries of the holy inquisition to search my chamber, when luckily they found me not at home.

The risque I had run could not cure the foolish passion that disturbed my understanding. I gave way more than ever to its violence, and like a true madman took it in my head to range the forests, without keeping to any direct way. All my nourishment consisted of herbs and wild fruits, and the only consolation I had was that of carving the name and cypher of my mistress upon the bark of trees. This wandering life produced its effect. I relapsed into a more in-

firm state of health than I had ever been in before, and my love diminished with my bodily vigour. By little and little my eyes were opened; I acknowledged my error, tho' late, and resolved to employ the remainder of my strength to return into the country which my extravagance had made me leave. Bewildered in the midst of a desert forest, I travelled many days without finding the path by which I had entered. The difficulties I met with drove me to despair. Obligated to perch at night upon trees, I saw nothing in the day but wild beasts, which made me every moment in dread for my life. I know not why I was yet afraid of death, in a situation that ought to have made it desirable. But that weakness I had, if it may be called a weakness in mortals. I came into the forest; Why, said I to myself, cannot I go out? How many unhappy persons, who have been cast away on desolate islands by shipwreck, have made their escape? A thousand such reflexions as these revived my courage, and possessed my brain when I was awake. Sometimes indeed my thoughts were of a different nature. My lot appeared most deplorable, and I cursed the passion that had drawn me into a labyrinth from which I had no hopes of escaping. One evening, when the heavens were wrapped in clouds, and my mind was agitated by cruel reflexions, I perceived a light of a sudden that struck my eyes, and appeared not to be far distant. Immediately forgetting the hazard I ran, in travelling by night thro' a forest, I descended my tree,

The Devil Hermit.

7

tree, and, conducted by the light, advanced to the place from whence it shone. At last, after much fatigue and labour, I got out of the forest, and arrived in the midst of rocks, at the mouth of a deep cave.

But how great was my terror! I perceived (can it be imagined) a troop of infernal spirits sitting round a great fire, and diverting themselves with burning paper under the nose of an old long-bearded HERMIT in chains. Provoked at the sacrilege of these Demons, I made five or six large signs of the cross; at which the infernal crew disappeared in a moment, bellowing out horrible cries. Elated at my victory I ventured on without dread, and drew near the holy man.

Ah, Sir, cried he, how many obligations have you laid on me! had it not been for you those insolent spirits had worried me soundly. But, my good brother, said I, why did you not have recourse to the same arms I made use of, to deliver you from those impious creatures? Are you ignorant that the sign of the cross drives away evil spirits? Alas! replied the HERMIT, I am absolutely forbid the use of such means; my birth and my profession will not permit it. I am a native of hell, and those gentry you saw are my fellow-citizens. If I had but once crossed myself, I should be banished that kingdom for ever, whereas now my exile is only for a time. Ay, said I, with extreme surprize, are you an inhabitant of hell? Of what use then are those trappings of a HERMIT? Is it thus
that

that you prophane the holy habit? You must be a strange devil indeed to ridicule the most venerable thing in religion! Ah, Sir, answered he all in confusion, please to pardon this act of my despair. I chose this habit, and this desert, only to conceal myself from the fury of my comerades. I should have had a miserable night with them, had it not been for your assistance. I am banished from hell for a hundred years, and all for a mere trifle; nothing but sleeping while a fat canon died. His soul, which had been intrusted to me, escaped, and this slight imprudence occasioned my disgrace. During the twenty five years since this misfortune has be-fel me, I have borrowed successively many bodies, in order to withdraw myself from the resentment of my fellows. I have been a lady of quality, an ecclesiastic, a courtier, a duana to a girl of fifteen, a begging friar, and at last chief of the grand signior's eunuchs: but seeing that all these fantastic bodies were insufficient to hide me, I came into these deserts in the habit of a HERMIT. Still my destiny owes me a spite, and my ill-fortune pursues me. Going some time ago to Bologna, at the request of a brother mendicant my friend, who had prayed me to serve a young lover driven to despair by the cruelty of his mistress, I was known by my colleagues, who pursued me into my retreat, and put me into the situation you saw. A good action that I had resolved to do has brought upon me this disgrace.

At

At his mentioning this circumstance, which revived the idea of my charmer, love, like a fire half-extinguished, rekindled in my tender heart. What do you say? cried I with surprise. I am that individual wretch whom you had undertaken to serve. Be persuaded then, that if you can enable me to succeed with that inhuman fair, I will be devoted to you entirely. If I can? replied he: never doubt that, Sir; I have done many such good offices since my exile. I am ravished to think I can serve you. So fine a gentleman as you appear to be, undoubtedly deserves the friendship of the greatest lord in our whole empire: judge then of the deference I must have for you. But you must unchain me; otherwise I can do nothing. I will then serve you, on the word of a devil, like a domestic that never receives his wages.

But how, said I, shall I break those chains of yours? They seem to me of a different species from all others. You need only go, he replied, into a chapel in the neighbourhood, and bring thence a small phial of holy water. The moment you pour it on my chains, they will disappear.

Touched with the captivity of this poor DEVIL HERMIT, I hastened, as soon as it was day, to fetch the sacred water, and suddenly, without reflexion, came and sprinkled it on his body. But no sooner did he feel the ablution, than he fell a howling most hideously. Ah, Sir, cried he, like one possess'd, what are you doing? You give me a thousand times more
pain

pain and torment than my scurvy companions. Pour on the chains, and not on me : I burn with a devouring fire. Alas ! do you not know that Demons fear nothing so much as that water ?

Pardon the mistake, said I to the devil ; I did it without thought. My eager desire to release you made me commit this blunder. Come, come, don't be in a passion ; you see your chains are gone ; you are at liberty, and a little scalding will do you no great harm. Besides, 'tis proper you should pay something for all the frolicks you have committed since you have roamed about the world.

After five or six hours spent in frightful contortions, the poor DEVIL HERMIT seemed to be quiet ; his pains abated insensibly, and he thought no more of his misfortunes. His liberty lay nearest his heart, which made him assure me of all his best good-will. Curious to learn the adventures of a devil of this stamp, I prayed him to give me an exact account of them. They follow precisely according to his relation, and undoubtedly they are very true : for he would not have dared to impose on me ; on me who would have punished him in such a terrible manner, and who knew he dreaded holy water more than a school-boy the ferula.

My name, said he, is ASTAROTH. I am none of your devils of the first class : a less honest devil might have made you believe so, but I chuse to be sincere with you. I own then ingenuously that I am but of an inferior race.

I have

I have been almost all my time LUCIFER's valet de chambre; and you know, Sir, that a valet de chambre is usually a fellow from among the dregs of the people, and very often a great scoundrel. My good patron, it is true, was very much like those libertine young lords, those courtiers, or, if you please, those indolent ministers, who are governed entirely by their valets de chambre; while these receive more addresses than their masters, and must be addressed too with a full hand, to make them procure you a single audience. These rascals act the men of importance with effrontery, and are a set of impudent bullies, that deal out the good graces of their lords with an insupportable pride and presumption. You see that my situation was not very unhappy; but I committed so many follies in my employment, that at last I was turned out of place.

My fortune had made me saucy by degrees. Before I was advanced to this comfortable post, my business had been (and business I had enough) to transport to hell the souls of false devotees. The degree of honour I afterwards held near LUCIFER's person, rendered me so insolent, that I was continually ridiculing his infernal majesty. I could laugh in his face, and even rob him with impunity. The pacific LUCIFER suffered all without complaining. If he had heartily curried my hide, possibly it had made me wiser: but he diverted himself with my follies, and I took the same liberty with his. When I gave him an answer, it was with an ironical arrogance.

I had

I had already sold above half his wardrobe, to make presents to my mistresses: for, Sir, begging your pardon, mistresses I had in abundance, notwithstanding my unpolished figure. I wore his clothes continually; I borrowed his figure; I copied his deportment; and by those means played his part with many beauties, who suffered themselves to be thus deceived. LUCIFER, meantime, shut his eyes to all my extravagancies, and I had been yet near his person but for a pitiful young dog of a devil, who managed with so much art as at last to supplant me. That instant all those who had loaded me with caresses, and promised me an eternal friendship, let loose their tongues against me. I had no enemies more cruel than those whom I had obliged. Well then, thought I, there is no probity in hell, and devils are altogether as wicked as men.

My life was examined, and all agreed that I was one of the most profligate valets de chambre of the whole infernal empire. My process was drawn up and got ready; I was unanimously condemned to drag into hell the souls of all ecclesiastics. O the cursed office! I could not go thro' it: for certainly there was business enough for an hundred associates. My fatigues were excessive — Overcome with labour, I had the unhappiness to fall asleep just when the old rogue of a canon was in his last agony. His place had been a long time pitched on in the most famous apartment of all the infernal regions. His scandalous life was known to mortals, as well as demons: a number of young and handsome devotees

devotees, who came before him, cried out, like mad creatures, for vengeance. I had express orders to bring him in great pomp: my drowsiness however made me neglect my duty. An old owl of a Capuchin, more rank than a he-goat, never quitted him till he expired; and, by dint of exhortation, extorted from him a loud MEA CULPA; which to be sure had never happened, if I had been awake, and near him. This, dear Sir, was the only cause of my banishment; and for this reason I have been revenged on all the race of Capuchins, as you shall see in the sequel of my adventures.

Banished from hell, I was obliged to wander a considerable time in the air; not knowing where to rest my feet, and dreading the hoots of my companions. Where, said I to myself, shall I go to shun them? For this cursed race besieges almost all the inhabitants of the globe. Whilst I waited for the sight of some inhabited object, I formed vast designs against those long-bearded hypocrites, one of whom had played me such a rascally trick. By way of beginning I suddenly raised a most furious hurricane, which blew down five of their convents. My design was at once to have crushed all their stinking retreats; but unluckily I met here with my match. All the rest, except these five, were protected by spirits more mighty than I: Besides, that ill fortune which now pursued me, had so ordered it, that there were but two monks in each of those five monasteries; the rest, according to their laudable custom, were all dispersed.

C

Some

Some were engaged with their dear devotees ; for, since the case of the famous Father GIRARD, all the brethren of the habit have taken a relish to that excellent man's way of devotion. Others amused themselves in emptying the cellars of stupid citizens, whose wives and daughters cannot withstand men of this sort, because they look upon them to be discreet. The wives hope that such holy horns will draw down a blessing on their family affairs, and settle the heads of their giddy debauched husbands : the daughters do it to save their future spouses a laborious task, and facilitate the business of marriage. Others roamed about the country, in order to junket at the expence of the superstitious peasant. In a word, this monkish carrion, which loves retreat as little as an author loves censure, had all taken wing except ten. I swore like a heathen at being disappointed. Fortunately, however, I flew into a village, where I found three ; but three of the most sprightly and best fed petit-maitres of all that bastard race of good St FRANCIS. They were only got into a tavern to refresh their gullets, which they did most furiously every moment, by embracing a great pitcher of wine of between six and seven quarts. I knew this tavern, and had often been there to set the drunkards together by the ears, and inspire the landlady with that scurrility which she continually vomits out against her husband. Good, said I to myself, I am at home here, and must give the company one cast of my calling. As I am fertile

tile enough in the invention of incidents, I presently conceived a project which succeeded to my wish.

I perceived by the fire-side a nasty drab of a servant, whose black and shining skin was as smooth as that of a sea-dog. A short flat nose, a mouth enormously large, and little round eyes, composed the physiognomy of *GUILLEMETTE*, (that was the name of this young lass, who was turned of her twelfth lustre). This homely hussy, said I, is terribly forbidding; devil as I am, I would have nothing to say to her myself. But a hungry dog will eat dirty pudding: this morsel is still dainty enough for fellows of that stamp. I will stake my reputation that I succeed in my project. The sequel proved my reasoning just.

I went in and sat down by them, and whispered incontinence, a thing they were not averse to, in their ears. Immediately their ruby faces persuaded me the train had taken. Assisted by the liquor, with which they had copiously swelled their paunches, I suddenly kindled an impure flame in their hearts. Such a fire makes more uproar in the breasts of these heteroclite wretches, than a thousand devils unchained and banished. I knew their temper too well to think they would repel my temptations. They gave ear, and began to finger the damsel. *GUILLEMETTE*, who had no want of appetite, and had fasted a long time, easily gave way to their persuasions. I made her believe that she should be thoroughly sanctified if she

granted to such pious persons an alms which they had more need of than of liquor. She received their careffes: insensibly a furious itch seized them all four; and, in a word, I had brought them well on.

The stable, where the bed of this nymph was, tho' filled with nastiness, appeared to them at that instant a magnificent hall. Thither they repaired to satiate their desires. But I took more care than to sleep in the happy moment; I was too mindful of what my droufiness had once cost me. Alert as a bird I fled to the countryman and his wife, who were in the garden, and insituated that somebody was robbing them. They ran full speed to seize the thieves; and, seeing nobody in the house, were instantly at the stable, where they beheld the merriest farce in the world. A Capuchin in close quarters with such a lump of deformity, is a very diverting spectacle. The clown, who had no taste of raillery, and his wife, jealous that her slut of a servant had passed her time so agreeably, set up such an outcry as brought together the neighbours. They fell upon these goats in human shape, and gave them a hearty drubbing. Every one of them made the best of his way; while I, transported with joy, and more satisfied with this scene than an amorous young girl on her wedding day, took my flight towards the capital of a flourishing kingdom, fully resolved to pursue my vengeance whenever I found opportunity. I found it more than once in the
sequel,

sequel, and always made use of it to the best advantage.

I was already within two leagues of the city, when I perceived a magnificent coach, drawn by six stately dun horses, and carrying a lady of the first quality. A fine opportunity this, said I to myself, for me to be concealed! This lady is not yet possessed, and my companions must be very crafty to discover me under the figure of such a woman. In a moment I ascended into the air, and formed a thick darkness round about the coach, under covert of which I transported the lady to an enchanted palace. I then assumed her figure, slipped suddenly into her place, and arrived at her mansion. One difficulty gave me pain: the lady was married; and, devil as I am, I could not fall in with certain points of complaisance which a husband requires of his wife. It was with pleasure that I heard that her lord, notwithstanding the beauty of this young creature, never came near her but once in six months: and all merely out of a capricious humour. They had their separate beds, tables, and domesticks. A reason in fact he had, and a very courtly one, for this procedure. The lady was not of equal quality with him, and he married her only for her riches. An actress, infinitely more amiable, captivated his heart. She was indeed but a cobbler's daughter; but the part of a theatrical princess had put her upon a level with the count de ****.

This fantastic body was of great use in introducing me at court. The lady was esteemed there for her virtues, and adored on account of her charms. I had a violent inclination to be acquainted in that region, where I had never been. As we infernal valets are not admitted within its verge, but confined in our functions to poor mechanics, it is a particular favour when we are sent to some burgher. These people we often drive to madness, because their virtue is proof against all our wiles ; one of them costs us more fatigue than a thousand courtiers.

I liked my situation perfectly well, and would gladly have kept it during my exile, if LEVIATHAN, one of the chief princes of hell, had not seen my metamorphosis. Filled with indignation at my assurance, he drove me away from him like a scoundrel. What can be done against superiors? Their injustice is always one's just. There is no demanding the reason of their tyranny, nor withstanding their wills, without feeling all the weight of their supreme power. Your plea, tho' ever so well founded, must give way to force. It was therefore my best expedient to decamp with all expedition. This lordly devil, not content with the insult he had put on me, sent his bailiffs, I mean his footmen, after me. These fellows, as great scrubs on those on earth, loaded me with outrages. I was obliged to fly into a remote province, where a courtly ecclesiastic lent me his figure. But before I entertain you with this
second

second change, it is proper to relate what I did at court.

Here the HERMIT seemed to be in disorder, and his whole fantastic figure was transformed: His eyes began to sparkle; he fetched a deep sigh, and the cave resounded with lamentable cries. I freely confess, I was not then much at my ease; for all this devilism made me tremble. Any other man I believe would have done the same; these infernal blades not being the most honourable folks in the universe. Dear Lord ASTAROTH, says I, in more confusion than a SPANISH virgin surprized with her lover, What is the meaning of all this? Do you want to give me too a specimen of your trade? Not in the least Chevalier, says he, you need be in no apprehension of danger. Alas, unhappy me! But have patience; a few lashes perhaps will excuse me. The fact is thus.

BELPHEGOR, a prince of great power among us, has for three or four years past worn the borrowed figure of a Chinese mandarin, who was the emperor's prime minister, in order to confront and bear down a covetous crew of hypocrites, more crafty than all hell united, who, to enrich themselves, have introduced the Romish religion in that country. Lord BELPHEGOR, a master in politicks, perceiving that these cunning knaves were about to destroy his power in that vast country, resolved to make them pay dearly for this their rash enterprize. He has almost accomplished his design; and, as he knows whatever passes in the universe, he
has

has heard that you have released me from my chains, and that the author of *THE JEWISH LETTERS* has just now published *THE CHINESE LETTERS*. He knows that I love that writer; I must go and pay him a visit, Sir. 'Tis a mere trifle, but I cannot resist his evocations. Rest yourself here, and be assured I shall soon return. Have no thoughts of going to Bologna; for the holy inquisition is in pursuit of you.

At these words the devil disappeared like a flash of lightening, and left me in a surprize that I did not soon recover. A mortal terror took possession of my senses: I knew not what course to take; and I had been two hours reflecting upon this adventure, when the return of *ASTAROTH* disembarassed me. What ails you? says he, appearing before me of a sudden, in the same manner that he went away: Have you not sufficiently learned, from the victory you won over my companions, the full extent of your power on people of my species? The customs of those we converse with should grow familiar to us. It is our way to leave our friends just in the same manner I disappeared from you. Be it so then, said I, recovering my courage at these words; I find myself already used to it. But I was afraid your journey would take up more time, and I knew not where to retire. Besides, it is now two days since I have eat or drank, and there seems to be no nourishment in these desarts, at least unless I return
into

into the forest, where I have run a thousand hazards.

I have provided for your wants, said ASTAROTH, presenting me a great piece of venison, which he pulled out from under his hermit's garb. He had also furnished himself with bread and wine, which I accepted without ceremony, and without inquiring from whence he had them. Hunger never gives way to reflexion, and mine was so great, that I kept swallowing above an hour without speaking a single word. ASTAROTH served me with liquor as fast I wanted. This refreshment, which I had great need of, put me again in good humour ; and then I perceived that the devil was not so well pleased as I, but seemed very uneasy. What ails you, says I, Lord ASTAROTH ? You appear as sorrowful as a coquet without a lover. Certainly you have had but an ill quarter of an hour with your devil Mandarin. Has he ordered you to quit your habit, and take post near the soul of some canon ? You seem in as bad humour as a monk retrenched of his pittance, or who is fasting at eight o'clock in the morning.

No, Sir, answered the HERMIT. It is true that I have been a little misused by my master : but he has not reduced me to such a penance as that ; he is not quite so unjust. He has condemned me for four months to possess a nun in despair. This is what grieves me ; for I have no liking to that sort of people. Besides, I have promised to assist you in all your undertakings,
in

in return for the service you had done me. Yet the poor young creature has great need of my help: she is just at the end of her litany, and wants to recover her fickle lover, who, after having enjoyed her favours, laughs at her misfortune.

Is that all, Lord ASTAROTH, said I to the DEVIL HERMIT, that puts you in such an ill humour? Certainly you perplex yourself for a very trifle. Take comfort prithee; you may easily discharge your office with me. Provided you favour me with some hours of your spare time, I am content. But give me the history of that nun; for without doubt you know her. It would be strange if I did not, said he; she is my pupil: but mum for that; I have my reasons for not saying a word. As he had told me all the extent of my power, I was resolved to put it to a trial. No resistance, said I in a masterly tone, either the history or the holy water, for there is still some left in the phial. Begin then, and this moment: I must know who that fair nun is that you protect, and be informed of what passes in those sacred retreats. Then you shall tell me what you have seen at court. Here Mr ASTAROTH began to reason with me: but five or six drops of that miraculous water, which I threw on his nose, soon brought him to compliance.

Ah, dear Sir! said he, gently (perceiving I was ready to wash him soundly) have a little mercy on my black skin. My carcass is very sensible; it cannot bear the least injury. Give attention and I will

will satisfy you : but hide that cursed bottle ;
for I cannot look at it in cold blood.

C H A P. II.

*Cupid masqued ; or, The History of Sister
Cornichon, and the Marquis de St Julian.*

THE young nun that I mentioned, Miss CORNICHON, is of distinguished birth, tho' she had a very moderate fortune. Her charms captivated a rich young gentleman, who promised her a plentiful allowance. She loved him in good earnest : but thinking him false, the imagination of his inconstancy made her retire into a cloister. Too young to examine the intrigues of such places, she blindly gave into the snares which the nuns had spread to draw her from the world. High birth and a tolerable portion are bewitching charms to all nuns in general ; and as nothing can resist those holy souls, it was not difficult for them to captivate CORNICHON.

The same amorous indignation that occasioned her retreat, revenged her upon herself. She imagined this procedure would drive her inconstant to despair ; and, deceived by these false ideas, she began and compleated her own sacrifice. You must think I had a great hand in this, and indeed I ascribe all the honour of it to myself. Scarce had she pronounced her vows,
but

but I dispelled the clouds with which I had till then surrounded her. She saw, but too late, that, abused by illusions, her measures had been somewhat precipitate. She learned that her lover could never have been capable of infidelity, if her own ill-conducted jealousy had not compelled her to misuse him. The false report of a perfidious confidant, drew her into the snares which had been spread for her. She was easily taken ; or, to speak more properly, it was impossible for her to discover the springs which had been set on work to deceive her. I foresaw that she would be a virtuous woman, but a very bad nun ; and, as I loved her soul, it was necessary I should use this stratagem to preserve it.

Her friend, very susceptible of the soft passion, could not withstand the gentleman's merit. Love took possession of her heart, and determined her to betray them both. As a girl thus desperately amorous will omit nothing to accomplish her ends, she conceived the project of setting them at variance, that the marquis might become sensible of her own charms. PERETTE (that was the name of this beauty) had some resemblance of CORNICHON, but with disadvantage on her own side ; she therefore deceived herself, while she disunited them. The gentleman, enrag'd at the coldness of his mistress, flies like a madman to his regiment ; and she, no less enraged at his inconstancy, shuts herself up in a cloister. He knew nothing of her retreat, nor she of his flight. The false friend dextrously avails herself of this separation : she informs the
marquis

Marquis, by letters full of artifice, that another had captivated the heart of his mistress, and that **HYMEN** would very soon unite them for ever. Rage takes possession of his soul; he marries without love; and **CORNICHON** turns nun without a spiritual vocation. While he forges himself fetters for life, she weaves for herself the bonds of a severe slavery.

The gentleman, upon his return to his paternal seat, hears with surprize the engagements of his mistress. He knows not what to think of her proceedings, and, desirous to be satisfied concerning a point which gave him so much uneasiness, sends one of his sisters to the parlour of the nunnery, who relates to **CORNICHON** her lover's disorder, and the motives that induced him to leave her so abruptly. Struck with this discovery, her tears were the only interpreters of her soul. The gentleman, informed of the situation of his mistress, finds means to speak with her, and justifies himself: she explains the cause of her behaviour, and they jointly detect the baseness of their pernicious confident. The tears and sighs of the Marquis gave but too much proof that he was innocent, and made **CORNICHON** but too sensible of the loss she had sustained. Reflecting on her irretrievable misfortune, her soul is agitated by the most cruel transports; her senses are all confused; the lustre of her eyes is at once eclipsed, and she falls down speechless in the midst of the parlour.

The maid, hearing the noise of her fall, runs to her with speed; whilst her lover, satisfied that

D

somebody

somebody was coming to her assistance, retires, both to save his reputation and hide his disorder. The grates prevented his flying to support her. She, recovering from her swoon, finds herself abed in a burning fever, which keeps her six months in a languishing condition. During this time she receives a great number of letters from her unhappy lover. These letters, far from calming her grief, did but make it the more severe; every reflexion was more cruel than the former. I swam all this time in delight, and felt my spleen dilated with her pains: for I love extremely to see disorder in a human soul.

Her complaints irritated her desires, and her desires augmented her pains; while the situation of her lover was almost equally bad. The various pleasures, however, in which his quality engaged him, by little and little abated his sorrow. Insensibly he forgets his mistress, but not till after a long course of intrigues. The Marquis had wit, and was as enterprising as a *petit maitre*: I prompted him therefore to take advantage of the tenderness CORNICHON still retained for him. In a word, he so effectually urged his point, that he arrived at the summit of his desires. All his love was then extinguished, and it was only in mere complaisance that he afterwards visited her. It was quite otherwise with Miss CORNICHON: she had a true relish for the sport, and when she observed not the same eagerness in her dear St JULIAN, she wrote him letters in the most pathetic language.

This

This unhappy recluse moved my compassion : I fled to her relief, and inspired her with such gay thoughts, as afforded her lover a most agreeable amusement. I have never abandoned her since that time, but am every morning in her chamber, aiding her in the composition of her letters. The Marquis de St JULIAN will stay yet two months in this city, and he makes her a visit once every week. Formerly, he was four hours every day at the parlour grate : but things are mutable in this world. Men surfeit in the greatest delight, when confined to the same object, and it requires a most disinterested constancy to be bound to a nun. Besides, it is usurping the property of the clergy. A huge lecherous friar began to grumble. This young pullet appeared to him a savoury bit, but unluckily another had got hold of it, and the fort was already possessed. Within this fortnight indeed he has made himself amends for the disappointment. Being in the confidence of sister CORNICHON, and playing the Mercury for her, his mouth was observed to water plentifully, every time he spoke to her. He had leave already to lick her hand, which he improved by degrees to the enjoyment of other privileges. But he has gone to work like a great booby : certain symptoms which the nun perceives make me tremble for her, and I think with good reason. I will inform you hereafter how she gets out of this confounded affair ; or rather, in what manner I help her out ; for without me the poor girl would deserve to be lamented. She has abundance

dance of enemies among her sisters, who all conspire her ruin. Her beauty and wit have drawn this envy upon her. Now envy in those retreats is much to be dreaded, and does infinitely more mischief than abroad in the world.

A nun tainted with this vice knows neither virtue nor religion. Is she a friend, she sacrifices you ; an indifferent person, she hates you ; an enemy, she calumniates your character : in a word, this passion is the ruin of all your cloisters. A jealous nun is more to be dreaded than a lionness enraged ; she uses a thousand devilisms to betray and ruin you. Hence the cabals, intrigues, spies on your conduct, to detect all your steps, and poison all your actions. The smallest faults are divulged as scandalous enormities, and the most upright intentions are invenomed. Her heart, corrupted by this passion, never lets her be easy, and this sort of frenzy always finds means to do you a mischief. An indiscreet word she treats as scandalous, and a slight irreverence she calls impiety. Are you in the parlour, she will maintain that she saw you grant favours to a man, and proceed to very bold and impudent familiarities ; that she heard tender and equivocal conversations, the substance of which she whispers from ear to ear. 'Tis a piece of confidence, she will say, that has been reposed in her, and she intrusts it now as a great secret, thoroughly satisfied at the same time that this secret will not be kept. This tells it to another, a third to a fourth, and these holy creatures always magnify their objects.

Insensibly

Insensibly it comes to the ears of your superiors, and sets them against you, while you are ignorant of the cause of this prepossession; for that they carefully conceal from you. They never concern themselves to give you charitable advice; that is a virtue unknown to these coquets in crape. Scandal to them is much sweeter, and the pleasure of surprising you in the least neglect.

Those circumstances which give little room to suspicion, grow stronger by degrees. At last they chastise you, and the slightest fault is punished with the utmost rigour, merely out of resentment. Self-love then begins to work; the heart revolts, and you cry out injustice: in a word, you become the martyr of your own temper, while your superiours make you the victim of their false prejudices.

The mind, taken up with a thousand impertinent cavils, which they daily raise against you, gives way to grief, and grows languid in the practice of virtue. Piety appears incommodious, and the duties of it are performed with extreme negligence: they give no relish, no delight, while the mind is destitute of its natural tranquility. The fervour of your devotion is cooled by the daily mortifications that befall you. You pant after liberty; every thing displeases; nothing relieves. Farewel to peace, which the heart is no more capable of feeling. These are the sorts of frenzy with which we affect a soul that is virtuously inclined.

You will tell me, perhaps, that these tricks are mere trifles, incapable of seducing a person

truly pious. I own they may appear such to you, because you have never been exposed to them : but a soul that has particular sentiments, and a certain manner of thinking, cannot digest these little matters. Frivolous as they may appear to you, they are capable of disturbing, vexing, afflicting, and of producing indifference and languor. The natural consequence of these is want of devotion.—But we have introduced the following other maxims, which you will think of more weight.

To make you apprehend me the better, I must first inform you, that among all the nuns which fill your cloisters, there is not a fourth part, I say a fourth part, who embrace the monastic life from a pious impulse. Some are compelled to it by inhuman parents, in order to enrich an eldest son : others are driven to it by disappointed love, when they have conceived that passion for a man they are not permitted to marry ; and others take this step to be revenged of a faithless lover. These retire to the nunnery out of necessity, being unable to support their quality ; and those are allured to it by the nuns, who forever spread their imperceptible nets : for you are to judge of those ladies as of us devils, that they are never so pleased as when they draw numbers into their own misfortune. The greater their troop, the more they hug themselves, as if the plurality of sufferers caused a diminution of the misery. Nuns of this later sort are generally young ladies of high rank, or they
enter

enter too young to penetrate the consequences of their engagements.

Is the daughter of a rich family put to board in a nunnery? The sisters, ever alert when interest is in view, (and interest is the *primum mobile* of all their actions) will be sure not to let her slip. Does the Abbess desire her company? (let us rather say, her money) all the society is informed of the plot, and every artifice is used to cajole the young innocent. She is distinguished from all her companions, and encomiums and compliments are lavished on her: every thing she does is applauded, and nothing she desires is refused. All the little dainties, all the sweet-meats fly to her chamber. She is a party in all the diversions of my lady Abbess, and has a promise of succeeding her when she dies; for never, sure, can they have a sister more worthy. Look, says one of these female-quacks, what sweetness, what an aspect is there! She is an angel! — Oh, yes Madam, you are one of the elect.

Stunned with their applications, poor Miss perhaps utters a few foolish things. Who can help admiring, says another, that delicate turn of mind, those fine fallies of wit! Yes, my soul, my dear little sister, you are the most amiable creature alive. You must never leave us; I should die with grief to lose you. In a word, they use so many wiles, that at last they triumph over the poor simple girl. After this prelude the directors come in play. She is intrusted to a dextrous and subtle father, to one of those
cunning

cunning blades who are at the head of their profession, who perform their parts with greatest skill, and who seldom miss carrying their point at the first attack.

A virgin of fourteen or fifteen is incapable of sage reflexions : her thoughts are all chimerical, and we devils insensibly foment these chimeras, till she engages, in spite of parents and friends, to sacrifice her liberty. Scarce has she passed her noviciate, but the caresses and complaisance are at an end. Her fortune is theirs, and that was all they wanted. The young nun, surprized at this change, says to herself, What have I done ? All the society shun me, and laugh in my face. A lay-sister, equally stupid and unmannerly, says an impertinent thing to her : she complains, but is only laughed at. The more she advances in age, the more her understanding encreases, and the more mortifications she meets with. Her reason by degrees discovers her imprudence, and she begins to perceive that a monastic life is nothing less than religious. She sees in it the intrigues, the gallantries, the envy, the jealousy, in a word, all the disorders that reign in the age. If they are less glaring than in the world, they are therefore more dangerous. They grow familiar, and she gives herself up to them with so much the more facility and ardor, as she is unacquainted with their consequences. She knows she has been abused, and restraint irritates her desire. Spleen, indignation, and often despair itself drives her into irregularities, that confound all the good dispositions of her soul. Pernicious
examples

examples are ever before her : those examples corrupt her mind ; she follows the torrent, and the torrent soon carries her to gallantry. Having never loved before, her tenderness rises to excess, and she is unable to keep within the bounds of discretion. Scandal soon follows, and after that correction, with an entire privation of liberty. Here we take full possession of her soul, and make it the victim of her thoughtless sacrifice.

You will tell me, without doubt, that no examples are sufficient to make a prudent young woman trample under foot the duties of her profession. Be it so : but can this young person, flesh and blood, always resist the seducing objects that are continually before her ? A nun, for example, that has no charms, or whose charms are decayed, has a generous good friend, who will make her ample acknowledgment for the favours she shall procure from this young sister. She engages to use all her art and interest. The men of this age have no great respect for a veil. A handsome young gallent, capable of inspiring love, insensibly wins the heart of the young damsel, who sees it is the custom of the cloister. They insinuate that thought till she grows full of it. One of my good brethren slides imperceptibly under her petticoat. Could she withstand many such conversations ? No : when virtue is too much exposed, it always suffers shipwreck. On the other hand, if she rebels against these fine instructions, she displeases that old friend, who never fails to cross her on
every

every occasion. The others all laugh at, and desert her. My sister, say they, in a way of irony, you make yourself frightfully ridiculous; you are going to disgrace our cloister, and we shall have no man will come near it. At last she finds herself obliged to be vicious, to follow the fashion of those charitable nuns.

The rest, with much less inward vocation, are abundantly more happy. Their hearts, already practised in gallantry, know how to restrain themselves within certain limits. Their flame indeed is sprightly, but they have the art of dissimulation, and carefully conceal those sparkles which might otherwise evaporate. This less active fire is obscured by certain clouds which hide its materiality. Prudence, or, to speak more properly, fear prompts them to preserve those appearances, which the ignorance of others is unacquainted with. They securely commit the crimes without being exposed to the danger, as they have impenetrable stratagems to avoid detection. In this consists the cunning we exert in their behalf. If they have not love to make them complaisant, interest will have the same effect. A generous lover is more to their taste than an amiable one, and presents with them supply the place of merit. A rich old miser, provided he be not covetous, nor quite nasty, prevails beyond a fine young gentleman. A block-head is preferred to a man of desert, because he is more discreet, and preserves their reputation. Sin, committed with such an one, always goes on with impunity: his reverence for the
sisterhood

sisterhood will never suffer him to blab. Thus, Sir, we possess the nuns in general, and this is the oeconomy of the cloister.

If a decrepid old sister can make no captives, she has other batteries, at least equally pernicious with those I have named. For example, when she hears that a young girl is cloistered on account of a gallantry which her parents did not approve, she presently insinuates herself into her confidence. As she knows that this damsel can have no access to the parlour, she cajoles her till by degrees she gets mistress of her secret. The poor innocent opens her heart to this MEGAERA, who makes her a thousand proffers of her service. By her the news of his mistress's retreat is conveyed to the deserted lover, letters pass forwards and backwards, and the secret is preserved, provided she is well paid. This couple by degrees find an opportunity to speak together, and they mutually take measures to relieve their torment. The old hag engages in all their schemes, and brings them to perfection. At last the walls are scaled to set the damsel at liberty, who flies with her spark, and marries against her parents consent.

Well, Sir, what do you think now of the nunneries? Are not these proper receptacles for the infernal nation? Indeed a cloister is our constant asylum, and we live better there than in any other place in the universe, because we almost ever play a sure game with these women. It is not till after he has won several signal victories, that a devil obtains this province. The place,

place, in a word, is a sort of recompence, like a government to an old officer, who has worn out his life and spent his estate in the service of his prince. At another opportunity I will give you a circumstantial detail of the life of a monk ; but we must go softly on, and you shall have an account of my adventures in all my different metamorphoses.

C H A P. III.

Astaroth at Court. What he sees, and what he does there.

AN hour after having borrowed the lady's figure, I arrived at her palace. I received a number of visits from all the principal courtiers, my husband only excepted, (for so I must call the Count de ***,) during my abode there. His indifference for his wife was founded, as I told you before, merely upon the inequality of her birth : otherwise she was infinitely worthy of esteem, as well for her beauty as for her virtue. Two months the lady had spent in her journey, which was undertaken to visit her parents, and engage them to give her a sum of money. Her husband, loaded with debts, had lost his very equipage in gaming, and now enjoyed it only on his word of honour. She brought enough to retrieve his circumstances ; and, not to wrong him, I must own, that within two days of my arrival,

arrival, meeting me by chance in a gallery, with two countesses of his lady's acquaintance, after a thousand civilities shewn to them, he enquired coldly concerning my health, and whether my journey had succeeded. Having answered him in the affirmative, he gave himself the trouble in the evening to come to my apartment, to take possession of fifty thousand livres which his lady had brought him. He had the extraordinary complaisance, moreover, to leave me two hundred livres for pocket-money: but as to caresses, he had more regard to his honour than to forget himself so far. His theatrical princess would have taken it ill, and his own quality would have been disgraced. I laughed heartily to myself at the extravagance of this nobleman; and at the same time was charmed with his ridiculous deportment. This indifference put me out of danger: for, with all my cunning of a devil, had he come to close quarters with me, I should have been plaguily put to it to bring myself tolerably well off. But luckily he made no offer of that kind, and left me without ceremony, carrying off with him the ready species.

The next day I was obliged to pay my duty to the king, to make my visits, and, in a word, to appear in public before the whole court. My address alone bore me thro' this; for I was absolutely unacquainted with the chart of that country. But, what a delightful climate for people of my species! I have seen in hell a great many devilish tricks, and was myself, as

E

I have

I have told you, one of the most arrant valets de chambre in the whole kingdom ; yet here I found myself a mere novice. The natural order of things is all reversed in this region. They sleep in the day, riot in the night, and shorten life by unheard-of excesses. The soul is a stranger to all sincerity, and all compassion. Double-dealing, imposture, scandal, and ostentation, are the only virtues known to courtiers. A near relation betrays you, an enemy caresses you, a friend ruins and makes a sacrifice of you. The husband is never seen with his wife, and the wife flies her husband as much as possible.

What meanness, said a nobleman one day to a lady that was his mistress, to have so much regard for your husband ! Fie upon such a beggarly taste ! you'll pass for the wife of a mechanic, a mere plebeian. As if the end of matrimony was mutual love ! You deceive yourself, madam, and run counter to all politeness and good manners. — Lord, madam, cried a dutchess one day as she accosted me, I am so fatigued with the civilities of the Duke de ***, that he is become quite insupportable to me. It looks as if he had married me only to make me ridiculous at court by his fond behaviour. Do but behold that melancholic man ! Always the same bed, the same table, the same coach. He actually kisses me, and talks tender things, till he runs himself out of breath, without giving me time to put in a word. How happy are you, madam, she goes on, to have a husband you scarce ever see ! It is now above four live-long days since I have had an opportunity

opportunity to spend one quarter of an hour with the Count de C***, the man whom I love to distraction. So, here comes the Princess de L*** to join our company. How beautiful, how amiable she appears! Who can be more happy than that lady? She has a croud of lovers, and suffers not one to languish in despair. Her husband, the Count de P***, always gets out of the way when she receives them. This is certainly the quintessence of good manners, and what makes him, in his turn, adored by all the ladies.

At this time the king, very much advanced in years, turned all his thoughts to the concerns of another world. In his youth the princes of hell had occasioned great disorders in his court; but at the decline of his days he had banished them all. When this monarch, who died two months after my arrival, came to the banks of the river Styx, all the infernal people ascended together in a croud, and took possession of most of his courtiers. I now saw myself lucky in my choice of a tabernacle to dwell in, which still secured me in a place where otherwise I must not have dared to appear, as the situation was so coveted by all my superiours. The lady whose figure I had borrowed passed for a woman so cruelly virtuous, that my very presence struck an awe on the most artful devil of them all, and not a fiend would venture to come near me. They wheeled about my person, but at a becoming distance. I had a great inclination, thus disguised, to have some diversion with one of our

E 2

chief

chief lords, by giving him free access to my person. Insensibly I engaged his regard, and by degrees we became familiar. This devil of quality was a very crafty one, and who thoroughly knew the hearts of the courtiers : he therefore diverted me between whiles with relating their characters, and some of their principal adventures.

Take notice, says he to me one day, of that man in the red cap : he is an excellent subject, and much respected throughout our empire. He has acquired us an infinite number of proselytes, and is in fact the evil genius of the state, and of him that governs it. Indulgent to the last degree, he has given that prince such an admirable education, that I have more hopes of him than of the grand Sultan. This preceptor, at present minister of state, is indeed a mighty good sort of man : he reconciles to his conscience whatever his master requires of him. He often scolds ; swears at every word he speaks, and sometimes even cries : as witness last night at the representation of AGNES DE CASTRO.

Hah ! here comes the Marquis de ***, the most affable and obliging nobleman in the whole court. Every man, without exception, is admitted into his conversation. He promises to every one all his interest : but the misfortune is, that he thinks for ever of his own affairs, and never of his promises. He keeps two mistresses, who ruin his fortune, and solicits a government to supply the extravagance of these heroines.

Do

Do you see that young prince? He is the most passionate and violent man upon earth. When he knows any fellow whom I mistrust, and who is subject to certain fits of devotion, that may deprive me of his soul, I prompt his highness to send him into the other world, which he does the first opportunity. I have already had a good number thro' his means, and indeed he is an inexhaustible treasure for the nether regions. He has an actress for his mistress, whom he beats like a stock-fish; which however does not prevent the lady from distributing her favours to many others.

Take a view of that ugly old harradan who comes this way! observe her grotesque figure! That marchioness now has her lovers, and has run her husband above 100,000 crowns in debt to pay them. It is she that supports that young gentleman who walks with her. The fellow is poor, and is he not in the right to live at the expence of such a baboon?

So, says I, whence comes the Dutchess de ***? She seems to me quite out of breath. A very pretty question, answers BELPHEGOR: she comes from LA SILLION's, and is running to —, where she has always one of the dearest apartments. The most miserable wretch, who is rich, may boast of having a dutchess for his money: but so insatiable is she on this head, that the most bountiful gallant never comes often.

Now observe a little that ecclesiastic and that duke, who laugh like a couple of ideots. Those are master and scholar. And what, says I, in

the name of sense, can make them giggle so immoderately? Nothing, he replied, but the conceit of spending the night together at Madam *COMMODOE*'s, where they lately made a most scandalous disturbance. The commissary, with two of his archers, ran thither at hearing the outcry: but the poor honest officer was obliged to return in confusion. These two lords compelled him and his followers to kiss the lady's posteriors, by way of punishment for having interrupted their pleasures. This is the whole subject of their extravagant mirth. The poor commissary was so mortified at the egregious affront, that he has lately quitted the city, and is gone to take up his residence in the country.

Do you observe that couple who are now coming towards us? The man is a notorious cheat, who will ruin the kingdom. He is a British fugitive, and now meditates great designs. His pretended wife, with her red and white complexion, is not a jot better than himself. They have had access, by means of my compatriots, to the greatest men in the land. His projects, tho' extremely dangerous, will be put in execution, and they give me pleasure by way of anticipation: for I hope to gain more by this game than in a raffle of monks. It will impoverish so many families, that rage and despair shall people a whole city of our kingdom, which I had allotted to new converts, who take refuge in foreign countries.

Here *BELPHEGOR* set up a very shrill cry. Dear countess, said he, let us instantly escape.
I perceive

I perceive a person at a distance that comes this way : 'tis LYCOPHRON, that redoubtable physician, who has sent an infinite number of inhabitants into the kingdom of *PLUTO*. The company of that gentleman poisoner will not suit us, and is only proper for those ladies who have jealous husbands ; or those husbands who want to get rid of their wives ; or to some reduced heir, who pants after a rich patrimony, and is quite out of patience. He kills with impunity all that trust to his medicines. But the other day he gave a strong dose of opium to the young monarch, instead of a cordial. He is the most ignorant quack in the whole world, and never knew what it is to study. All the morning he scribbles over some waste paper, which a bookseller has the complaisance to print, in order to sell the sheets afterwards to the wholesale grocers. After dinner he haunts the coffee-houses, to take in some novice at gaming. If you suffer him to enter your doors, trust me, 'tis all over with you : your husband will imitate a great many others, who love poor mistresses that they may enrich them, and rich wives that they may beggar them. Our *ÆSCULAPIUS* was intimately acquainted with *LA BRINVILLIERS*, and there are very weighty reasons to let him go on quietly without punishment. All his knowledge lies in the pills of that *MEGÆRA*, which he sells very dear to those who are so unhappy as to want them. In a word, he is a very basilisk, who kills with his eyes, and poisons with his breath : let us fly him as a woman would fly an impotent

impotent lover.——I am very much obliged to you for your advice, said I to BELPHEGOR: but I know him, and have no inclination to make him an assignment.

After this conversation my noble devil left me, without having once suspected my metamorphosis. Immediately I fled home, where a young knight of Malta expected me with impatience. He was very intimate with the lady whose figure I had borrowed. BELPHEGOR had inflamed him with desires of enjoyment, and assured him that he would make me sensible of his torment, and mollify my virtue. I confess that I have a hundred times repented my being a devil, incapable of yielding to his passion, and following the examples of the court ladies; for certainly ADONIS had not more charms than this amiable Chevalier. His constancy, for a courtier, was extraordinary: already, for more than four months, he had declared himself an adorer of the countess, without obtaining the least favour; which, on her part, shewed an admirable resolution for a lady of quality. I frankly own, that I had more regard to his passion than the countess; which made me give him some hopes of success. He pushed the point a little home upon me; but it was out of my power to make him happy. I demanded time to consider the matter, and seemed to capitulate upon honourable conditions; resolving all the while to inspire the lady with the same sentiments, whenever she came home. I have succeeded to admiration; and for six and twenty years past,
(for

- (for so long they have had a right understanding together) their reciprocal passion has not in the diminished.

The knight, as satisfied as a nun who had just received her new year's gift, conducted me to a pompous entertainment, that was given one evening at the Gobelins by a certain great princess. Every thing there was very splendid; but nothing gave more pleasure than the second dessert. For that reason it was very long, and the debauch of it was pushed to some excess. Every female above twenty years old was prohibited this entertainment. When it was found that the liquor began to operate, all the lights were put out in a moment, that CUPID might have full liberty to rove without restraint. My sprightly young lover did not sleep on this occasion, and the scene at first put me in a fright: but I presently assumed the shape of a man, and so the Chevalier missed his scent, when otherwise he would certainly have run me down. A confused noise was at first heard throughout the assembly. By degrees a profound silence came on, which was followed by sighs from contented hearts, and a few feeble exclamations. The soft and tender words that I heard fly about in whispers, gave me to understand that this feast was to the taste of the guests, and infinitely beyond all the diversions of the carnival; and the consequences of it shewed my opinion well grounded. A little while after several young virgins disappeared, under pretence of illness; and at the end

end of ten months they shone forth again, with new vermilion in their checks.

I had been now at court above three months, so fully employed that I had not time to look round me. But one night finding myself at leisure in my apartment, it came into my head to examine my house, and visit all the servants while they were under the dominion of MORPHEUS. My pretended husband had a chambermaid, and I a valet de chambre ; for we both followed the fashion of the court. There were thirty other domesticks in family, fifteen men, and fifteen maids ; or, if you please, women ; or, to speak more justly, neither maids nor women. I made my tour from chamber to chamber, paying the Count, as became me, the first visit. The poor gentleman, by mistake, was in the chamber-maid's bed, and I found them very fast asleep. All the rest were coupled in the same manner, every JACK with his JOAN, down to the very scullion-boy, who was snoring in the garret with the hostler's daughter, a girl that had not yet entered in her teens. So, said I to myself, this is like to be a very fruitful house. But the best of it is, that not one creature can reproach another. A very regular gradation, from the meanest servant up to the master !

This phænomenon, which indeed was no miracle in that delightful climate, gave me the thought of paying a like visit to the houses of several courtiers. I found them all pretty near in the same situation. In one the husband was
absent ;

absent ; but a great booby of a footman occupied his place. The fellow was not asleep, and the lady made good use of her time. In another house, Madam was sleeping by the side of her chamberlain, while happy Monsieur regaled himself in the bed of an actress. In a third the husband was at rest in the arms of a bloated old governess, and his lady losing her honour in a party at ombre. In a word, having gone thro' about a score of palaces, and perceiving that every thing went on much in the same manner as in the house I inhabited, I resolved to play them a trick in my own natural way. With this view I went home, and muttered over certain charms, which buried them all in a profound lethargy, that I knew would continue till eight o'clock the next evening. I exempted not a soul from the effect of my magic power, but the porters, and a few leprous wretches that no woman would touch. At five o'clock in the afternoon I took my flight from house to house, making myself invisible to enhance the pleasure of the adventure. I opened all the doors to a great number of persons of both sexes, who came to pay their customary visits. Surprized to see nobody when they entered, the guests went from room to room, and surveyed at leisure this humorous assemblage of love. In one I waked the master from the side of his chambermaid, and the good man burst out into a hearty laugh to see his dear moiety in the arms of a valet. In another I took the charm from my lady, (that lady who had lodged with her chamberlain)

lain) and she stormed like a mad woman at her husband, because she caught him with the governess of her children. The lord who had just risen from his actress, threw out a thousand invectives at his wife, whom he surprized in the flagrant act of infidelity.

The history of this affair, for a considerable time, gave a great deal of diversion to the court. The Count my imaginary husband, and his domestics, tho' guilty of the same crimes, were the first to railly those who had been detected. As they were not like to be more reserved for the future, I determined to make an example of them too, and put my design in execution the very next night. After having lulled them all heartily to sleep, I went to the enchanted castle to fetch home the lady my original, and made her an eye witness of the disorders of her family. As she was virtuous at this time, she drove away all these scandalous domesticks, not omitting ever her husband's chambermaid. His lordship, who loved variety, was very well pleased with this revolution. She who succeeded took the place of her predecessor; as who could long resist the endearments of a Count?

Having again transported the lady back to her former habitation, the same œconomy began again in the house; whence I concluded them an incorrigible company, and that the devils had no need to tempt such people as these. An idle life, good eating and drinking, and above all the master's example, instructed them
better

better than hell itself could have done. It is not without reason therefore that our diabolical princes are fond of the court, because they live there in a sweet repose, and have scarce any business on their hands.

I passed my time, you see, most agreeably. Fortune, however, jealous of my happiness, no longer continued me in her favour, but put a sudden end to my enjoyment. I have told you, that I had given some hopes to the knight of Malta. BELPHEGOR, surprized at my resistance, (for he was entirely devoted to the Chevalier) began to doubt that I was not a real woman, and suspected that my form was merely fantastical. Immediately he took his flight to hell, and convoked together all the inhabitants of that empire, who appeared to his summons; they appeared, I say, all but your humble servant. Then he no longer doubted my having borrowed the lady's figure, and his rage drew from him the most horrible imprecations against my poor individual. I knew from the first the danger I was exposed to, and therefore went instantly to the enchanted palace, released the Countess, and transported her to her chamber. — I then took my flight into the middle region of the air, where, alas! he soon discovered me. I was obliged to confess my crime; for a crime it was to insinuate myself at court. All his rascally followers, my merciless comrades, hunted me with so much brutality, that I trembled lest I should never get out of their clutches. By degrees however I made my escape, and after

F

having

having rambled thro' several provinces, I met by chance a canon or abbot of the court, who gave me an asylum in his body.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Occupations of Astaroth, as an ecclesiastical Chancellor.

DO not imagine, Sir, that my new host was one of your common sort of abbots, your ecclesiastics reduced to a simple prebend, your zealous priests who set hell at defiance: such a thought as that would do me great injustice; I was too fond of courtiers to debase myself so egregiously. Having tasted the pleasures of a court life, I was in no haste to renounce them. For this reason they gave me, by way of irony, the name of the courtly DÆMON, and some writers have put me upon a level with BELPHEGOR and LEVIATHAN. It was in wandering from country to country, in order to escape the claws of my enemies, when I was just ready, out of mere despair, to take repose under the frock of a father cordelier, that I found this holy man, who soon made me amends for the affront I had received, in being obliged to leave the Countess BELISE.

It is indeed very true, that the court I was now going to act my part in could not be put in competition with the other. Nothing was
seen

seen in the first but magnificence, riches, banquets, and balls: the second, on the contrary, was distinguished only by rapine, niggardliness, and sordid interest. In the first was an infinite number of fine gentlemen, witty, polite, and affable; in the second a filthy troop of hypocrites, buried almost for ever in drunkenness. Yet even here I tasted a great many pleasures, as the mummeries which passed were seasoned with a certain satirical salt, that made them extremely delightful.

The person who had lodged me was the second man in the state, and inferior only to the prince. He held the two chief employments of that ecclesiastical sovereignty; which employments, notwithstanding, were incompatible in themselves, and could not be filled up by one and the same person. But what cannot favour perform? It gives capacity to those who have it not. I confess that the figure of this man made me recoil at first, and that it was with reluctance I so debased myself, just after having quitted a beautiful lady, as to jump down the throat of a creature four foot and a half high, with broad round shoulders, the paunch of a *SANCHO*, and a mean crabbed air, which at first glance gave a full indication of his folly, and that his understanding was altogether as short as his sight. Such was, in reality, this quibbling sophistifying Monsieur l' *ABBE'*, the Count de *ROLLIN*: The state has been divided from time immemorial between *ASMODEUS* the devil of luxury, and *FAGEL* the devil of chicanery. The first

presides over the heads of the community, and the second influences the populace only : in a word, *ASMODEUS* is as it were the prince, and *FAGEL* acts as the chancellor.

Happily for me I detected, in the form of secretary to my new host, another disgraced devil whose name was *URIEL*. He had already officiated for ten years in this character, and with the highest applause from his worthy master. You know doubtless that Lord *URIEL* is the verriest thief, and yet the most arrogant rascal that ever hell produced. At my arrival, however, his credit began to diminish: he had committed so many rogueries to enrich his patron, as to draw on himself a great number of enemies. The very imps of *ASMODEUS*, jealous of his glory, and because he had gone even beyond them in promises, were trying their utmost to out-reach him. I dextrously took advantage of the remainder of his credit, to get myself acquainted with the intrigues of this petty court. As I had over him a sort of superiority, I commanded him to unmask the sovereign and his principal courtiers. I was obliged, in order to make him comply, to declare my name ; but it was upon oath first given, that he would never betray me, nor discover my retreat to my persecutors. The oath of a devil indeed is no very sacred thing, as the scoundrel taught me within four months after, when, to support himself, he impeached me. But if I am not revenged on him, never believe *ASTAROTH* again.

Friend

Friend ASTAROTH, says URIEL to me one day, I am going to court, to get the deposition signed of a gallant ecclesiastic, who was lately deprived of his benefice for having lived too regularly. If thou wantest to know the sovereign and his chief courtiers, come with me, and leave thy good master a few hours. He spends the afternoon with Madam LECHER-
e U S, and has no occasion for thee: for his own inclination will make him act more brutalities than thou art able to suggest. — Let us go then, my dear URIEL; I am ready, said I, to bear thee company. — Scarce were we a league from the city when we met a small company of people, who were taking the air in a spacious avenue shaded with poplars, and watered by a fine large river.

The first thing I enquired was, who those men were. They are, answered he, the prince and his courtiers. Dost thou note that great old shark of a man, who walks with the help of a crutch-stick? That is BARNABAS, the great BARNABAS. What, said I, the prince? Ay friend, the prince, replies URIEL. — He has, in my opinion, a very mean aspect and air: that gray head of his gives me but an indifferent idea of his wisdom, and capacity for government. — What a fool art thou, says he, for a devil of thy experience! Thou oughtest to know, that they are not always men of merit who are raised to such dignities as these. A lazy disregard to all the excesses of the nobility is preferable to any other quality. Besides, intrigue and
F 3 simony

mony are engines that seldom here fail of success. It was merely to cabal, and the interest of a few particular men, that this fellow owed his high elevation. They thought, by electing a man without genius, to engross the government in their own hands. But BARNABAS has bit them all: tho' a wretch that formerly often wanted bread, he has violated his probity, and all the ties of friendship, to maintain the authority they gave him, and has aptly enough taken for his motto, *Plus voluit.*

Sayst thou so, friend URIEL? replied I. The fellow then is not such a fool as I thought him. They present him with a liquorish bit, and he keeps it: I think he is very much in the right. But favour me with a particular account of the manner of this his extraordinary elevation. — Give attention then ASTAROTH, and you shall be obliged. But first I must let you into some essential circumstances: for only we princely devils are capable of knowing the intrigues carried on at these elections, and I should be as ignorant as thou art upon this head, if I had not been ten years in the administration.

You must know, in the first place, that this state is dependent on the great JUPITER of the tiara; that the nomination can be made only by a certain number of persons, who are all possessed by the imps of ASMODEUS; and that a man must be of this body to have any hand in the affair. For this reason many noblemen of high quality enter themselves in this fraternity, whenever the sovereignty is vacant. LEVIA-
THAN

THAN and BELPHEGOR order FAGE L to set all the electors together by the ears, and divide them into several factions. He afterwards inspires every one to give his voice to him that bids most ; and as many are gaping after this lucrative dignity, it always sells high, there being usually four or five competitors, who all have their partizans. These divided parties, after a thousand diabolical tricks, are gradually united by dint of money, and reduced to two. If these two factions are equal, a very large sum goes to get over one or two electors, and then the nomination is made. It costs his new highness indeed, sometimes, about an hundred thousand crowns : but as he is sure to reimburse his capital with large interest, by selling all offices that depend on his sovereignty, the advancing the money gives him little concern. He enters upon a certain fund, that brings in at least four hundred thousand crowns *per annum*.

These people, however, are obliged to act certain grimaces. They celebrate public prayers, and call down the holy ghost to their assistance. But all that is only a finesse of Master FAGE L's, that by fascinating the eyes of an ignorant populace, he may the better fish in troubled water. In a word, there passes so many apish, not to say devilish tricks at these elections, that I should never finish the irksome relation. Besides, you will become acquainted with these things yourself, if you stay here any time : for yon old fellow is just at the end of his career, and must very soon go to receive the punishment
due

The Devil Hermit.

due to his avarice and ingratitude. His apartment is already prepared among us : we wait his coming with impatience, in order to exact from him a severe retribution for all the goods that he has ravished from the poor, to support the luxury of his family. — But let us return to his election.

This righteous ecclesiastic was very poor, and subsisted upon the benevolence of a generous nobleman, who had undertaken to maintain a certain party. But perceiving that all his intrigue and cabal, in spite of the money he lavished away, was unable to triumph over the other factions, he was inspired by F A G E L to aim at the sovereignty. For this purpose he had recourse to certain stratagems, which are known only in our empire. He imagined that our ecclesiastic, whom he loaded with so many favours, and who looked with such a sanctified demure countenance, would resign to him the sovereignty, if he could cause the election to fall upon his head. Vainly he thought within himself, that a saint of this species would never be able to bear the weighty burden of government. He bound him therefore by a secret oath. But no sooner was our good man elected than he forgot his oath, and his friendship, and was fully persuaded that a perjury of this nature is a mere peccadillo, that a few years of purgatory hereafter will amply atone for. The nobleman, seeing himself so basely duped, took a sudden trip into our kingdom, to carry thither his complaints, where he waits the coming of
this

this false friend, in order to make him sensible that the laws of friendship and gratitude are not violated with impunity. I am of opinion, however, that the match will be very unequal; for the good man, during his reign, has acquired a number of partisans among us, who in all likelihood will be too powerful for his antagonist.

Dost thou see that lubbardly greasy-guts, who diverts himself with a foolish thing he has just uttered! That is a pitiful fellow of a verger, whom his highness has raised out of the dirt to make him his prime minister; an arrant varlet, born under a lucky constellation, who, with every bad quality that goes to compose a perfect knave, hath made himself rich at the public expence, by selling all the good graces of his master: formerly he was a mercury, now a sole privy counsellor.

Hah! what kind of a man is that, who distorts himself yonder like one possessed? — How, said he, friend ASTAROTH, dost thou not know that scoundrel? I am surprized at it. And yet he is one of that species who caused thy banishment. He is ape and buffoon to the prince, who delights in his low witticisms, and ridiculous capuchinades; and has therefore made him the second person in his council. Ay, said I, is he one of those miserable hypocrites? But he has no beard, and that prevented my knowing him. Let it not surprize you, continued URIEL, that he wants the tokens of virility: it is because the unlucky poor dog has undergone
the

the fate of ABELARD, for having made too free use of what nature had given him. Well URIEL, cried I, I must take vengeance on this great booby, for the scurvy trick played me by his brother. By your leave, neighbour ASTAROTH, said my guide very smartly, he is under my dominion, and we shall quarrel if you touch him. It is he that procures the ratification of all my infamies. If I lose his reverence, I must soon pack up and be gone. He is my protector, friend, and it behoves me to take care of him. The other day he obliged the prince, upon my recommendation, to sign the pardon of a young canon, who had got two sisters with child. It had been all over with my spark but for his interposition. The very next day, out of mere friendship to me, he procured mercy for the curate of a small city about two leagues and a half from the capital, who had debauched the four prettiest young girls of all his flock. In short, I could not possibly enrich my master, if this bon companion did not palliate all my legerdemain tricks. Such a brother as this is a real acquisition, which hell may be proud of.

Very well, URIEL, I forgive him then ; but here comes another that shall not escape so easily. That end of a man there, is it not a capuchin ? Upon the faith of a devil, I should think it a tall Prussian grenadier cut in two. Be what it will, here goes at him. Hold, hold, no quarrels among friends, said URIEL again ; I protect him no less than the other, for he is the prince's

prince's director. I insinuate to his highness, thro' his means, whatever I please; for example, to sell all benefices, or at least to confer them only on infants, incapable of knowing the function they embrace; or on blockheads, without the least tincture of literature; or on debauchees, who spend all the revenues in gratifying their irregular passions; or, in a word, on footmen, who, grown haughty by preferment, treat with contempt all others who rely on their protection. Hence proceed so many excellent men, who come in crouds to people our empire; hence those debaucheries, those scandalous amours, which call the blush into every modest cheek; hence proceed ignorance, drunkenness, injustice, assassinations, and those other shameful vices which reign with a dreadful tyranny among the populace; hence, in a word, that unruly race of men, who know neither probity nor honour. The example of these guides leads them blindly into such crying disorders, that all strangers look upon this country, not as a place inhabited by men, but as an infernal colony; so that ASMODEUS lives here in mere idleness, and FAGER has very little to do.

But tell me, friend URIEL, who is that little original with an Italian phiz, and a malicious smile in his countenance? That, says he, is a cunning sharper, who has made his escape from the court of the great JUPITER of the triple crown. His avarice had led him thither, and he had amassed there abundance of money,
by

by selling dispensations at random to all comers. Tho' born in the lowest obscurity, that dwarf of a fellow aspired at the purple, which undoubtedly he had merited by his knaveries; but, unluckily for hell, he was supplanted, and obliged to return from whence he came. He then got to be substitute to the prince, in order to perform the functions of his ministry. It was wisely done to chuse such an accomplished cheat, such a worm, that will eat out the remaining intrails of the people. His pale countenance, without dispute, denotes his Italian inclinations; and indeed he takes little pains to mortify his outward man by a life agreeable to his calling. He passes for a saint however here; but for an abandoned fellow in the country he left. He is a true imp of hell, and has acquired us more souls than a dozen of our own emissaries. He had enriched a niece by his monopolies, whose husband, since her death, enjoys with impunity the revenues of the church.

And whose is that superb equipage, which advances this way? Certainly it must be some ambassador, coming to obtain an audience of the prince? — *ASTAROTH*, thou art a mere novice here, said *URIEL*: all that gaudy train is the trapping of a monk. *DON NICAISE*, who owns it, has found means, by favour of his habit, to overtop all the prime ministers of this country. Born among the dregs of the people, he renounced, out of humility, a chimerical succession, to catch one more real, as well as more considerable. The vows of poverty,
and

and renunciation of the world, which he took at the feet of altars, were the means of luxury and ambition. He quitted for God a vile and contemptible condition, in order to embrace one of high distinction. A man must have a very disinterested virtue to take such a step as this. Scarce was he richer than the Saviour of mankind, having only a cottage for his habitation, and a waiting-woman for his wife. But now, in a cloister, he has splendid coaches, magnificent palaces, a levee like a prince, and ladies of the first quality for his mistresses. With them he devours the substance of an infinite number of unhappy farmers, whom he and his predecessors have reduced to beggary. *ASMODEUS*, I see, is whispering in his ear: let us hide ourselves for fear of being known.

But this great man, said I, seems uneasy and melancholic: What can disturb a person of his distinction? — Ah, my dear *ASTAROTH*, he has very good cause. Yesterday a gentleman of the first rank, both for birth and merit, disputed with him the precedence, and treated him with a little uncivil language, but such as his pride deserved. How could he brook such a heinous offence? *ASMODEUS* now prompts him to complain to the sovereign, and to-morrow he will put it in his head to commence a law-suit with the nobleman, to dispute with him an estate that joins to the abbey-lands; and, tho' the nobleman's family has possessed it above two hundred years, it will be proved, as clear as the day, that he has no manner of title

to it. The suit will last twelve or fourteen years, and then the nobleman, having spent half his fortune, shall pay all costs, and lose his estate. This will be the issue of the quarrel that now begins ; and I must say the gentleman well deserves it. What ! a man of his rank not to give way, and to be wanting in respect to the son of a baker ! Indeed, his lordship is an impertinent coxcomb. — But let us conclude this dialogue, for it is time to go back to the city. — As soon as **URIEL** had presented his petition, and the prince had signed it without reading, we returned with all expedition to the hotel.

C H A P. V.

*New Sights which the DEVIL HERMIT
was entertained with at the Court of ***.*

WHEN I came to the palace I was quite at liberty ; for my carnal habitation was not yet returned from **MADAM LECHEROUS**. After having rambled from room to room, I sat myself down among the domestics. An impertinent valet de chambre, lolling negligently upon a couch, assumed the man of importance, and condescended to talk with five or six footmen, who stood round him with abundance of respect. He preached morality to one ; turned another into ridicule ; called a third unmannerly

ly dog, for being covered in his presence. Learn my friend, says he, that when his excellency is not at home, I represent his person ; and it does not become a pimp of a skip-kennel to answer me with his hat on. But à propos, Sirs ; my master stays out long to-night. By heavens ! he uses me ill. It is pass one o'clock in the morning. Does he think I will break my rest in this manner ? Faith, gentlemen, he is deceived, he is mistaken in his man. I am none of those vulgar valets de chambre but as good a man, tho' I say it, as my master himself. Then addressing himself to a chambermaid, whom he wantonly ogled, My father, says he, was the best perriwig-maker in our village ; and who is his excellence pray ? Without favour he had been inferior to me. O ! here he comes, and faith in a pretty pickle too ; I fancy he wants no supper : his mistress has not used him so ill to-day. What a life is this for an ecclesiastic ! What injustice there is in the world ! Well, fortune was sadly mistaken ; she had better have raised me to his post.

Next day the chambermaid, who had no respect for him, related all this to my landlord. I prompted him to turn away the scoundrel, which was accordingly done. My chap then loses in an instant all his French air, and runs to the footman whom he had insulted the evening before. My friend FRAMBOISE, said the varlet in a submissive tone, you know the deference and respect I have for your person. My dear master loves you ; oblige me, and obtain

my favour, and upon the faith of a gentleman of the chamber I will not be ungrateful. FRAMBOISE, like a cunning fellow, laughed in his face, and thrust him out neck and shoulders.

My charitable host had a magnificent palace, adorned throughout with the spoils of the church and the people. His servants were numerous, and almost as regular as himself. The maids lived in perfect harmony with the footmen; but as they were not enough to make equal couples, one of them served two or three. It is true that jealousy sometimes occasioned family broils; but the master, like a prudent man, always appeased them, and laid the blame on the weakest.

ASTAROTH, said URIEL, this is a conclave-day: but I believe his excellence will not be there; for he is obliged to preside in another tribunal, where he will determine a cause in favour of a person whom he condemned as guilty eight days ago. I confess, he does not do it without reason. My master did not know him, and the adversary had made him a present of a fine golden snuff-box. But our man has since acknowledged his fault, and the day before yesterday sent him two stately horses, with fifty louis d'or. This procured him the promise of a rehearing, and that rehearing will go much in his favour. Several essential depositions had been omitted. The secretary of the tribunal, who is an insatiable blood-sucker, was not greased in the hand, and had therefore laid them aside by my master's order. But when the horses
and

and the golden louis arrived, it was resolved to join these papers to the rest ; so that the honest man is now sure of victory. I am ravished at the thought ; for he is an excellent chapman, who has always abundantly supplied my necessities with money. Two fraudulent bankruptcies have put upon him a level with the best men in the whole city. The villain that sues him never gave me a sou, and therefore his claim is ill-founded. He requires that honest merchant to re-imburse him twenty thousand florins, which he lent him before his second bankruptcy. Now this demand cannot but be unjust, because the other proves evidently that he has lost above a hundred thousand florins, which he gave in wedlock with his daughter, who without that could not have married a petty lord of a parish. What an unfair thing it would be to make him repay such a debt ! My equitable master therefore has taken the noble resolution to give him large damages, and all costs of suit : so that, friend ASTAROTH, you have absolutely no occasion to be with him to-day. If you care then to accompany me, you shall see a pleasant conclave, in truth as grotesque an one as ever was seen in our kingdom. I will give you an idea of those who compose it, when once you have been a witness of their decisions. You will find yourself in a land of great knowledge. Yesterday you saw at court the two principal buttresses of this senseless Areopagus ; I mean, the substitute and the director of his highness.

About nine o'clock the secretary **URIEL**, for fear of fainting, stowed in his paunch five or six large slices of ham, and two swinging bottles of wine. So my good friend, said I merrily, you are not over sober now for an ecclesiastic. His excellence really is much more regular than you. He has taken nothing this morning but a dish of chocolate, and about half a partridge, with one small bottle of Tockay wine. Poor gentleman, I pity him; it is almost ten o'clock, and he has already been up at least an hour. He never dines till half an hour after twelve: judge then, I beseech you, the sobriety of this good man. Two long hours without taking the least nourishment! This is indeed carrying his mortification to a very great length. He makes amends for it, I own, in the remaining part of the day. He allows himself two bottles at dinner, four more before supper, and one and a half after; which to be sure is a *quantum sufficit* for a corporation of those dimensions: for I am certain, that if what he eats and drinks in one day could be collected together, it would make a body considerably larger than that which receives it.

In troth, **ASTAROTH**, thou art a merry wag, to preach up abstinence here. Know, my friend, continues **URIEL**, that the corps which I inhabit is the least intemperate of all the courtly fraternity. Poor devil, thou art little acquainted, I perceive, with canons yet: but have patience, and thou shalt see many other excesses in this country. **ASMODEUS**, from
their

their very birth, accustoms them insensibly to this kind of mortification. It is by this that they distinguish themselves from the common burghers, from whom they could not else be possibly known. They wear the same dress, except at church : they have their wives, like your married men ; their concubines, like your petit maitres : they cheat like shop-keepers, are as covetous as usurers, as treacherous as artificers, without faith and without honour like the populace.

Very good, said I, this country pleases me much ; the people just hit my taste, and I fancy I shall stay among them a long while : but let us go to the conclave ; it is almost high time. With all my heart, answered *URIEL*, and immediately mounts into his coach ; for his individual, who was the son of a journeyman blacksmith, and had never in his youth enjoyed one quarter of an hour's pleasure, but spent his days in the most laborious indigence, was now resolved to make himself amends for his past sufferings, by all the ways that effeminacy, and the most refined luxury could dictate.

Being arrived at the court-house, we went up together into a long gallery crouded with people. Monks there were of all colours, ecclesiastics of every age, women and girls, men and boys ; and upon the visage of each might be seen certain symptoms, which gave some insight into their affairs. Here a troop of young bigots, with the most timorous and humble air, uneasily waited for their examination, in hopes to
be

be admitted into orders: there a company of priests, venerable for age and sanctity, stood accused of practising too much severity. Here young men and maids, with a gay and wanton air, were eagerly ready to part with their money, for leave to put themselves under the yoke of **H Y M E N**: there some of both sexes, more advanced in years, were come to make complaints against their respect moieties, in order to obtain a divorce, or leave to shut up the delinquent party in a cloister.

At the sight of secretary **URIEL**, they all approached with the utmost submission to crave his protection; while he scarce deigned to vouchsafe them a look. — I was a little disgusted, I must own, at the arrogance of this black-guard devil-secretary. He passed thro' the midst of the multitude with the haughty air of an **ARTABAN**, and without returning any salute. What stupid wretches, said I to myself, are these people! they all know the origin of this fellow, his extortions, his thefts, and his scandalous life, and yet they shew him so much respect! Well, it is certain that favour covers abundance of filth, since it is capable to impose in this manner. — But I met with many other subjects of astonishment, after I had been an hour in this diabolical conclave.

The young monks were the first who advanced. An humble physiognomy, and a servile outside, constituted all their merit; for as to learning, they had little enough of that; one only excepted. He indeed had good natural parts,
and

and loved study ; and he alone was refused admission. He happened to answer the bully of a professor with a little modest confidence, but the most pertinently that could be. This raised the choler of our pedantick theologue, who immediately cried out, What an impudent block-head is here ! Go, my friend, go and study a few years longer. At the same time I was morally assured, that he knew more already than the professor.

But here comes a good priest, whose gray hairs and venerable aspect are indications of his real virtue and merit. What, says my secretary, the parson of St Fiacre ? Ah, my good friend, you are a very odd sort of a man. I hear you had the rashness to refuse the Easter communion to Mr JOUFFLU, because he keeps a concubine under his wife's nose. It becomes you much, Sir, to give yourself such airs as these. People report too, that you read the holy scriptures without permission ; which is forbid in this diocese, and which I now forbid you again. The curate modestly answered, Sir, I have possessed my benefice now forty years, and my life has been irreproachable during that time. Heaven be thanked I have always done my duty like an honest man, and am therefore extremely surprized at being cited to come here above ten leagues, in order to be censured for having excluded a man from the communion, who is not only an adulterer, but a thief, a murderer, and, in a word, a villain of the first rate.

You

You are to know, my friend, replied the secretary, that it is sufficient that we look upon Mr JOUFFLU to be an honest man. It does not belong to such a doating old fellow as thou art to take liberties contrary to our orders. The curate answered, I am astonished that such a boy should pretend to teach me my duty. Who, pray, gave you authority to speak here? You are no member of the court: it is for other men than an upstart secretary to reprove me, supposing that I have offended against my duty.

Scarce had the old man uttered these words, but a confused murmur was heard thro' all the assembly. A young fop of a canon, who passed for a gentleman, because he had assumed the name of the Count de G****; this beardless brat, I say, who is entirely destitute of common sense, broke into a furious passion against the poor curate, and vomited out a thousand impertinences. After this fit of choler was over, it was resolved, by the general voice of the Areopagus, to suspend the honest parson a whole year from all the functions of his office, and confine him in a seminary. A very equitable sentence this, said I to myself, and worthy to be writ in letters of gold: ASMODEUS himself could not have dictated a better. Cardinal MANQUE sneered; the hypocritical capuchin hung down his head; while another great fantom of a secretary, who for twenty years had been studying all the crafty subterfuges of the Italians, dropped a few obliging expressions to comfort the poor curate; but as he was known
for

for a most refined dissembler, scarce would the old man vouchsafe him an answer. I believe he had very good reason for what he did: it is dangerous to give ear to men of that equivocal character.

See gentlemen, cries *URIEL* suddenly (assuming another air) yonder comes Miss *MANON*. That big-bellied maid wants to be married, and indeed it is high time she was. The parson of her parish, apprehensive of scandal, has desired me by letter to do her the favour of dispensing with all the three times of asking. The man you know is my friend, and it is for his interest that the affair be brought to a conclusion. By all means, says the Count de *G*****, and with a great deal of justice in my opinion: What think you of it, gentlemen? All the rest remaining in profound silence, the girl had her business done for a small matter.

Come in, Madam, says the secretary to another woman. This is Mrs *LAIDRON*, who has been a widow three months already. Her gallant has lain with her all that time; for the poor woman cannot live without a little of man. She also wants a dispensation, and promises an hundred crowns to have her marriage kept secret, because she has entered into contract with two others, who may impede her lawful intention. Has she the hundred crowns here? says the Count. Yes, my Lord, the woman modestly answers. Dispatch her affair then, adds our blessed Count: it is proper sometimes

times to grant favours, in violation of the established forms.

Miss CHRISTINA too, who comes next, is in haste to be married. She wants to have one ban only dispensed with. And who, my girl, says the Count, is your intended husband? It is such an one, my Lord. Hereupon the dispensator grew severe, and repeating the name with contempt; O child, you must publish your third ban; we grant no such kind of dispensations. But, answers the damsel, you never refuse them to other people. — You are mistaken, wench, we grant them only to whom we think proper. But tell me now the truth, hast thou let the cat come at the cheese before it had received the blessing? Hast thou been playing with that blockhead? No, my Lord, says CHRISTINA very deliberately; but — with a young ecclesiastic of your relations. Out of regard therefore to the blood, I hope you will favour me with that little indulgence. O yes, cousin, if it be so, to be sure the affair shall be dispatched.

Come in Messieurs CORNU and COLOUS; what is your pleasure? Mr CORNU spoke first, demanding a divorce, and that his wife should be shut up in a nunnery. For what reason, Sir, says the Count. My Lord, because my wife is run away with the brother Mendicant of the Cordeliers: they have lived together this month, and the wicked woman has robbed me of all my money. The thing cannot be done Mr CORNU; that friar is a very good man,

man, and without doubt has taken her away only to correct her. But, my good Lord, they have been seen in bed together. You are an impostor, firrah, replied the Count, and scandalize a member of the holy religion: begone. Well, Mr COLOUS, now for your business. I have the same complaints to make concerning my wife; only her gallant is a lay young fellow in our neighbourhood. O the vile action! cries our impartial judge, to use an honest man at this rate. Let him not only have a divorce, but an entire dissolution of the marriage, and shut up the adulterers all the days of her life.

Yonder are Madam IASQUELINE and Madam PERELLE; what would they have? To cloister our husbands! they bawled out like a couple of demoniacks. The villains have used us ill, because we were caught in bed with two canons. Dispatch the orders immediately, says the Count, and see them well secured. This ended the session.

Well, what dost think now, ASTAROTH, of this famous conclave? Think, says I, why that these wretches are less honest, and more corrupt than we. Hell itself would never have thought of pronouncing such iniquitous and partial judgments. Innocent poor devil! cries out my comerade, all this is but a mere trifle. Thou hast seen nothing yet, in comparison of what they sometimes do. The other day, for example, a most amiable young lady, desirous to marry a worthy gentleman whom she loved, could never obtain her request, because she had

H refused

refused her favours to the parson of her parish, who is an open profligate. They even proceeded to invent so many calumnies against her lover, that he was obliged to quit the country. But he will be severely revenged on them, and is at this time almost ready to make them feel that exemplary punishment, which their horrid villainy so well deserves.

Let us quit these wretches then, dear *URIEL*, cried I with some emotion. As much a devil as I am, it is impossible for me to hear these abominations without being enraged against such abandoned monsters. But give me some idea of these unjust judges ; for I imagine their manners must be yet more perverse than their judgments. Thou art much in the right, says he. The two first you already know. As to the Count, he is a pert little coxcomb, immersed in the most scandalous debaucheries. He keeps a brace of whores at a time, who so drain his finances, that he is every where in debt, and pays nobody. The gigantic pedant, who examined and rejected the young monk, is the most conceited animal of the age he lives in. He believes his own noddle includes all the science of the universe. Obstinate and positive as a mule, he is mortally hated by all mankind ; and at the same time that, thro' an excess of ambition, he has ruined himself to usurp a dignity, and supplant the lawful proprietor, the chief honour he has obtained is to become frightfully ridiculous.

His

His colleague is what we call a good companion, one who loves his bottle more than his bible. His ruby pimpled face gives a perfect idea of his life and manners. The swaggering little blade, with an effeminate face, who sat at the end of the table, is the sultan of a numerous seraglio, of which he is unable to do half the drudgery. The liquorish young pullets, under such an impotent director, lie and languish with desire; and now and then some of them take their flight from the nunnery, to seek their fortune elsewhere.

As the next day was a solemn festival, I could not be excused from the duties of my office. Besides, it was pay-day, and it is not customary to be absent on such occasions. Every canon scores those days down the margin of his almanack, which he turns over six or seven times a week, instead of a breviary, to get them all by heart.

When I came into the church, I was charmed with the modesty of all the ecclesiasticks, and the simplicity of their dress. Form to yourself the idea of a company of odd mimicks, whose attitude and gestures would force a laugh even from the originals they affected to copy. Some negligently lolled in their seats, with one knee cross the other, lifting up the leg in a horizontal line, in order to shew the fine clock of a pair of silk hose, or the neat stitches of a long-quartered pump. Or leaning on one elbow, with snuff-box in hand, they were seen to leer at certain young coquets, who, charmed at being taken

notice of by these ADONIS's, put on a thousand affected airs to captivate their hearts, whilst they were assisting at divine service.

Others, equally attentive as the former to the duties of the place, talked alternately to all who surrounded them, criticising with a scornful smile the behaviour of certain ladies, and pointing them out with the finger, who threw out amorous glances on some of the fraternity. Others again were every moment patting down their periwigs, and brushing their cravats all be-yellowed with Spanish snuff, in order to whisper some stupid thing in the ear of a pretty woman who sat near them. In a word, not one was employed in devotion; the performance of that they left to their underling curates, who received pay only that their lords might be at liberty to play the fool.

My tabernacle, not quite so foppish as the rest, was in more serious cogitation. But instead of meditating on the mysteries of religion, he was consulting who should pay for a fine toilette, of 2000 livres price, which he had presented to his mistress. He met with a man in the afternoon, who was very ready to take the charge on himself.

Here I broke in upon my DEVIL HERMIT. But Lord ASTAROTH, said I, How did you do to avoid the holy water? Did not your excellence run a very great hazard, and expose yourself to the necessity of using what you so much fear? — O dear Sir, do you think these people amuse themselves with such trifles?

They

They enter the church much in the same manner as a soldier enters the trenches, and seldom think of the holy water-pot. Scarce are their heads within the door, but their eyes wander all over the place, and their wanton glances are darted to every corner, that they may reach those of their mistresses. If they perceive a well-dressed woman, they move that way on purpose to stare her in the face; which they do with so much impudence, that they put to the blush even the most arrant coquet. If they perceive her to be handsome, they immediately offer the snuff-box, and endeavour to scrape acquaintance with her.

After service we returned home, and found our dinner prepared. It was high time, indeed, to take some refreshment, having been so fatigued at church; and accordingly my outward man indulged itself at table. But as the cook was absent, the poor temperate chancellor was very indifferently served, and obliged to put up with a strong gravy soup, and two pretty savoury courses. Instead of bisk he had nothing but a fine Bruges capon, garnished with six snipes. He had no appetite that day, and therefore could not eat above two thirds of what was brought before him; but the frugal feast was a little made up with a delicate dessert, and a good quantity of wine. After his two bottles of Burgundy, he swallowed a third of the best Champaign.

Having well victualled his camp, he thought of taking a two hours sleep, and then waiting
upon

upon Madam LECHEROUS, in order to pass away the time till midnight: but this once my good chancellor reckoned without his host; he had no afternoon's nap, and was very ill on the occasion. URIEL, who saw his uneasiness concerning the price of the toilette, brought him in the news of a chapman. This person, having learned that a canonicate might possibly be vacant in two or three days, came to offer him 10,000 florins, to procure it for his son. The lad, says he, my Lord, is one of the most wicked young rogues that ever lived. Wine and women are all his delight; and, tho' not above sixteen, he has already half a dozen mistresses, to whom he has given above 6000 florins that he robbed me of. He is withal very lazy; and, in a word, fit for a canon and nothing else. Your excellence may depend upon what I say, and that he has all these qualifications.

Mr VAILLANT, answers the chancellor, I am your friend, and you know I have formerly served you. But are you an honest man? may I be sure of the 10,000 florins? My Lord, they are ready, and here is a bill in proper form for the whole sum. Very just, replies his excellence. Well, I will go directly to the Prince, and secure the prebend for your son. Take care that the sick man dies but within this month, and young Mr VAILLANT shall certainly succeed him.

I am now once more at court, where my good tabernacle of flesh sets forth his request. Scarce
had

had he done speaking, but the canonicate was granted, upon condition only that a thousand florins should be given to the prime minister. The bargain being thus made and ratified, nothing was now wanting but to send the present possessor into the other world ; and I took that part on myself, and dispatched it with great expedition. But before I inform you of the stratagem I made use of, I must say a word or two more concerning the court we are now in.

His highness was at that time engaged in a party of quadrille, with three distinguished men of his court. The first that struck my imagination was a fat droll with a round face, whose good case denoted him to be a canon. His foppish airs would have imposed on any other but me, to conceive a great idea of his power. But he smelt so strong at the same time of rhubarb and drugs, that it was easy to detect him by the nose. This little country apothecary had found the means of rising to the dignity of page to the prince ; and it was the custom of this sovereign to advance all his servants to the canonicate, in order to save wages ; so that laqueys, cooks, and turnspits, with him wore the furred amess. This fellow lived in the utmost intimacy with his master ; drank familiarly to his health ; took upon him the man of importance ; and sometimes thought himself worthy of the title of excellence. He had reason indeed to set much value on himself, because the prince loved him, which was an effect of his good taste. He repeated to him an infinite
number

number of stale jokes, which he had learned by heart, and was enabled to shine by mere dint of memory. The chapter he had intruded into was happy in having such a member, who knew perfectly well how, by frequent clysters, to evacuate the riches of the church.

The second was a little meager man, who seemed to be swelled with insupportable arrogance. It was credibly reported, that he had contracted these two qualities of his wife, while the good woman was equally stupid and masculine. In spite of nature and his stars, he was determined to pass for a man of wit; and as his dignity of burgomaster raised him a little above the rank of a common merchant, he thought to put himself upon a level with men of quality. He was chief indeed of about a score burghers, men who were fitter to make grooms than magistrates. This little fellow was rich, covetous, and presumptuous. Because he knew the two first rules of arithmetic, he would take upon himself to puzzle the greatest mathematicians. The canon apothecary turned him to ridicule, and our witty citizen swallowed all the ironical pills with a clownish grin, crying out from time to time, O, Sir! you flatter me too much. He lived in a pretty sort of a house, almost over against the man who made the fourth of this party: but this house was not large enough to satisfy the vanity of his wife, who was the greatest devil of a woman in the whole city; which is giving her a very compleat character, when we observe

observe that the women of this country surpass even the men in debaucheries.

The last is a man of wit, valuable for several good qualities. His father was a coachman, and the son is now one of the richest nobleman in the country. He owns several castles and lordships, and among others, a fine fertile estate about two leagues from the palace of the sovereign, which makes him the lord of several noble fiefs. He holds a court of justice, one of the most magnificent in the sovereignty. Tho' the father had no higher title than Master JAMES, the son is saluted Baron de ****.

Here the harlequin capuchin, otherwise called the ape of the court, enters without ceremony. No sooner did this original appear, but the three dependants instantly rise; not out respect to the man, but complaisance to the sovereign. Our buffoon laughs in their face, and runs on to the prince to ask him for a pinch of snuff. Well, says his highness to this oddity of a man, what news is there stirring? The dirty devil answers laconically, Nothing: I come to ask your highness a small favour. There is a monk below, who promised me six pounds of snuff. His superiors have banished him to a kind of solitude, on account of his busy temper, which spreads dissension wherever he comes. His name is Father B***, and he begs to be permitted to live in the city. I have heard great complaints of that man, says the prince, and know him to be a mere libertine. He traverses the city all day long, on purpose to sponge on the inhabitants:

tants : in short, he is a very parasite, and I can do nothing for him. Ah, Sir, but my six pounds of snuff! Thou art in the right my boy, says his highness: I had quite forgot that. Write a letter then from me to his superiors, that I will have him continue in my capital. Out runs the mimick triumphantly, making five or six capers ; and no sooner was he gone, but the prince cried out in rapture, What an amiable fellow is that ! My solitude would be insupportable without his company ; and therefore I can deny him nothing.

His excellence, my host, being returned to the city, sent for the merchant, to inform him that his son should be a canon. But you seem concerned, says he, Mr VAILLANT ; what is the cause of that sorrowful countenance ? The cause, my lord, is very rational ; the sick man is like to recover, and seems not ready to leave his prebend so soon as was expected. Patience, good friend, says my tabernacle ; leave the matter to us, and all shall go well.—Here, in order to secure to him the 10,000 florins that he so panted after, I inspired him with the following successful stratagem.

Our poor languishing canon, tho' but sixty years of age, was exceedingly worn ; thanks to three young governesses, whom he had kept successively. A son and a daughter, who owed their being to the two first of these, had a long time waited with impatience for the inheritance of his wealth. As they were the children of such a worthy father, and two so amiable mothers, they followed

followed their steps with the utmost exactness, and the daughter was at that time the mistress of our young canon expectant. I improved the access she had to the good old man, and ordered *URIEL* to whisper in her ear that she ought to get rid of him as soon as possible, because he had formed a design to alter his will. The poor girl, very open to our inspirations, gave him a strong soup, which in twenty four hours sent him to officiate upon the banks of *Styx*; so that the citizen's son was put in possession, and we cleared nine thousand florins by the bargain. The daughter of the deceased entered very readily into the service of the new canon: but the inconstancy of her lover, and his scandalous life, obliged her soon after to seek her fortune elsewhere.

Already had I tasted, for near four months, the sweetness of a life extremely voluptuous, among the persons of first quality of this country. I cannot say but I was very well satisfied with what I had enjoyed, and began to desire, by way of variety, a little recreation in the female cloister, to which I instantly took my flight. *FAGEL*, who made this place his usual residence, did not detect me. I saw, in these holy retreats, the most charming adventures in the universe, and often passed a full half day in the parlour without being weary. Often I enjoyed the whole world in epitome, and there was no end of receiving visits. Delicate collations were here served up, to lovers who paid handsomely for them: there amorous addresses
were

were made to the young and handsome sisters, who were enraged that those who made them did not proceed to action. Some exclaimed against certain indecencies, and seemed to be mighty angry at what was offered, when at the same time they were making it all extremely familiar. Messengers were ringing every moment, to deliver in their billet-doux: and the old procuresses came loaded with baskets of sweetmeats, bottles of wine, and other delicacies, to please the voluptuous palates of the generous and good natured sisters. A small chaplet, or an agnus, was the whole return for all these obliging presents, which were more agreeable to the fair prisoners than even money itself.

The conversation of the old nuns was sprinkled with malicious satire. They were all better newsmongers than the Dutch gazetteers, or the writer of the Hague letters in the Daily-advertiser. Those that were most reserved had always some piece of scandalous history; and every day furnished them with a new topic. I was very attentive to a story, which the mother abbess of one of these nunneries related to an old ecclesiastic, who had been formerly her gallant. As they were both then turned of their thirteenth lustre, they made the follies of their neighbours a sort of alleviation for their own impotence; and, incapable of sinning themselves, they shewed no mercy to them who had yet ability. These holy souls, without question, were persuaded, that by thus aggravating the fact of others, they should stifle the reproaches of their
own

own consciences. As the history that this lady related, and to which the charitable priest, between whiles, added a little salt of his own, is sufficiently amusing, I shall give you the particulars of it with great sincerity.

C H A P. VI.

*The unfortunate Lovers : or, The History of
Don BERNARD and Madam URSULA.*

A Gentleman of distinction, but the younger brother of a numerous family, having by chance got acquainted with a very amiable young lady, the heiress of a considerable fortune, suffered himself to be carried away by the movements of his heart, in full persuasion that his relations would be charmed that he could so well supply the defect of his own patrimony. The chevalier, who was a man of merit, and very handsome, easily got the good graces of the lady. Their hearts, mutually inclined, soon found the means to lay themselves open, and that explication was followed by an inviolable promise of eternal love.

The gentleman's father, who piqued himself much on his antiquated deeds, being informed of the gallantry of his son, took an opportunity to address him with an air of authority. I am informed, said he in a surly manner, that you are in love with Miss SOPHIA. But my dear
I Sir,

Sir, pray what do you think to do with her? Do you imagine that a man of my quality will consent to such a despicable alliance? Is the daughter of a banker worthy to be admitted into my family? I command you to leave her, young gentleman, or you may expect to feel all the weight of my just indignation for your obstinacy. Never think to dazzle my eyes with her riches: they are no temptation to me, and to prevent their seducing you, I order you to get ready within two days, to go to your brother's regiment.

The young gallant falls on his knees at his father's feet, and implores his mercy with all the tender language of a despairing lover. His sighs, his tears issue in abundance, to make the old gentleman sensible of his violent passion. But his humility, his grief, his despair, were equally useless. Far from softening this inexorable parent, it only made him more vehement, and drove him to the utmost extremity of rage, till at last he even threatened the life of his son. Our stedfast lover, grown mad at such treatment, fled to his mistress, and related to her all the particulars of this conversation with his father. Fair SOPHIA was shocked at the unexpected storm, and felt all that could be desired from the most sincere lover. She advised him to retire to the house of his nurse, to avoid a father's resentment; promising to send him thither all he should want; which she accordingly did with infinite pleasure.

Tho'

Tho' the banker was ignorant of his daughter's inclinations, yet as he was a man of good penetration, he took notice of her melancholy, and required to know the reason of it. Miss was persuaded that her father loved her fondly, and therefore ingenuously owned her passion, together with the rise of it, and the obstacles that opposed her happiness : she only concealed the retreat of her lover, whom she saw every day. Her frequent visits had but augmented her flames, so that all the prudent advice of her father was of no effect : neither his menaces nor his promises were sufficient to conquer her passion.

It is hard for two lovers, desperately fond, to keep within the bounds of decency. Whenever opportunity is at hand, CUPID usually hides himself under clouds, in order to palliate what is due to honour. SOPHIA was too complaisant, and could not long resist the eager warmth of her tender adorer. At last they sacrificed to the Cytherean goddess ; and it became requisite to find means for securing their mutual possession. Not many months passed before some symptoms appeared, which predicted a temporary illness. The beautiful SOPHIA persuaded her lover to fly into some foreign country, that they might put themselves under the yoke of HYMEN : and as she well knew where the wealth of her father lay, she took five or six bags of gold, and eloped from her paternal house.

The banker soon perceived the diminution of his money, and had no suspicion of any other thief than his daughter, whose conduct, for some

days before, had give room for jealousy. He pursued her closely, and caught the amorous couple in a small village not a great way distant. At the sight of the old gentleman our spark made his escape, and carried off the pieces: and the banker conducted back his daughter, and shut her up in a nunnery. On the other hand, the young gentleman's father, having heard of this adventure, made such enquiry after his son, that, by means of his treacherous director, he soon got him into his hands. This inhuman father, after having cruelly abused him, had his son confined in a house of correction, where he languished a full year in the most deplorable condition. At last, finding means to escape, he took refuge at the house of an honest priest, with whom he trusted all his money, and who, for only fifty louis reward, gave him a faithful account of it, and officiously found out the nunnery in which the fair SOPHIA was cloistered.

The nuns in that country are the most tractable things on earth, and extremely compassionate to the weaknesses of young people. This is indeed the only charity they literally practise; nor do they this but after suitable presents, without which their hearts are as hard as a rock. As our lover had still a good round sum, he dispensed it with great prodigality; and the covetous nuns readily opened their eyes at the appearance of gold. They not only admitted him to interviews with his mistress, but even suffered her to retire with him in a hall adjoining to the parlour. As that is a place sacred to scenes of this nature,

nature, none but the most generous persons are admitted into it. SOPHIA had been cured of her former cholic, by a crisis that is common to such sort of diseases ; and she no longer remembered the many ills it had exposed her to, nor the solemn oaths which her pains had extorted from her. She ventured afresh to face all the dangers of the same woful distemper, and was determined to undergo a second eclipse. She was more lucky however than to fall into it ; no obstacle opposed their designs, and the two lovers were lawfully married in the country they fled to. A few months after the stock began to decay, and meagre want, with her rueful countenance, began to appear : in a word, extreme necessity obliged them to return to the place of their nativity. SOPHIA implored the clemency of her father ; and the good man, overjoyed to see her, forgave all that was past. The gentleman's father was dead with rage and indignation. His son's marriage had caused such a cruel disorder in his mind, that he uttered against him a thousand maledictions at the very time of giving up the ghost.

No sooner was that learned AREOPAGUS, of which I have before given you some faint idea, informed of the arrival of our young couple, but they disannulled their marriage, and thundered against them the sentence of excommunication. Insensibly the banker persuaded his daughter into an indifferency for her husband, and made a mere phantom of her marriage, which at best he insinuated was very

scandalous. SOPHIA, either thro' her own fickleness, or out of complaisance to her father, would have nothing more to say to the Chevalier; who, half mad at the inconstancy of his wife, retired into a monastery. As madam had been used to the comforts of matrimony, she could not long do without them, and a sprightly young canon found the means to become master of her heart. Men of this kind come at once to the point, and have very little regard to a woman's reputation; and he we are speaking of was so very indiscreet, as to make a parade of his gallantry, so that their intrigues became publickly known.

The discarded young husband, who had taken the vows, and assumed the name of DOM BERNARD, was ready to die with grief when he heard of the conduct of his wife, whom he very tenderly loved. He resolved on a terrible revenge, and having obtained from his superiors the liberty of a few days absence, he transformed himself into a footman, and found means to get into the service of the canon, who had no acquaintance with him. It is even said, that persons of virtue and reputation assisted him in procuring this place, which he held three days without being able to effect his designs. The fourth day he learned that his faithless SOPHIA was to wait upon the canon. He took his opportunity, and hid himself in a place proper to surprize them. At the sight of his wife's infidelity, rage took possession of his heart. He had arms at hand, with which like a madman he

he rushed on the canon, and with two plunges of a poinard left him dead on the place. SOPHIA falling into a fit, DOM BERNARD went out, and returned to his monastery with all the calmness imaginable.

Madam SOPHIA, being recovered, was carried to her own habitation. A few reflexions discovered to her, in the murderer of her lover, her injured husband, whom she now resolved to imitate. In a short time she entered into a cloister of the same order with DOM BERNARD, for whom her passion began to revive. After such a conduct as she had been guilty of, she imagined it impossible ever to meet with a pardon; and therefore resolved to follow him into his retreat, that at least she might give him no further uneasiness. URSULA was the name she assumed, in the room of SOPHIA.

A year after pronouncing her last vows, she was obliged, for the sake of health, to go and take the air. She chose for that purpose the house of a neighbouring gentleman her friend, whom DOM BERNARD knew to be a man of great virtue. Hearing that his dear SOPHIA was there, he went to pay her a visit. His heart leaped at the sight of her, and he could not withstand his violent inclination to come to a closer conference. In a word, they mutually opened their minds, and came to a reconciliation. Forgetting all that was passed, they resolved to live once more together; and with that view, instead of returning to their respective

tive monasteries, they made their escape within a fortnight into Holland.

The old governess, who related this history, spoke of the lady with great indignation, and treated her as an infamous libertine; but the good woman had forgot her own youth, when she entertained four lovers at a time, and was not cruel to either of them. Her conduct certainly was more worthy of censure than that of our married couple, whose religious vows were absolutely void in themselves, and whose conjugal obligation still subsisted, in spite of the ignorance of those who had set it aside. But this wise synod makes no scruple of treading under foot all the laws, both human and divine. —I will take another opportunity to relate the conclusion of this history: for our unhappy pair, after all that has passed, are still threatened with a tragical catastrophe.

Scarce were four months gone over our heads, before *URIEL*, the most rascally of all the subaltern devils, was terribly threatened by *ASMODEUS* for having revealed the secret of the canon's death; when, to clear himself, he threw the blame of that discovery on me. What, says *ASMODEUS*, is that poor dog among us? Is it he that takes the liberty to intermeddle in my affairs? It is true indeed that I have been absent from the body of his excellence, being fully satisfied that he would make good use of my advice, and that thou *FLAGEL* wouldst supply my place on occasion; but this scoundrel valet de chambre of his luciferian majesty,

majesty, shall he have the temerity to come into a country that is entirely devoted to me? I shall make him remember this, with a vengeance to him! He then began with his incantations, and summoned me to appear. I found he was in earnest, and that it would be but a word and a blow: therefore I made use of my cunning, which indeed I had plenty of, and got off with all expedition. My next receptacle was the body of a Duana, into which I retired without being seen.

C H A P. VII.

Astaroth avenges the Knight for the Cruelties of his Mistress.

BUT, my dear DEVIL HERMIT, cried I, with some emotion, methinks you may now very well interrupt the thread of your narration, in order to serve me according to your promise. Here have you amused me, from day to day, with your diabolical conversation; and never once seem to have thought of my inhuman fair, whom you promised to make flexible. Can you not rely on my word then? said ASTAROTH in a surly tone. I beg of you, Sir, to inform yourself better concerning us devils, and not measure our probity by that of mankind. Be assured friend that I think of you, and wait only for a favourable opportunity

opportunity to do what I have promised. I expect the fair creature to come out of the city. He then went on in a softer tone: The time of your felicity is at hand; your charmer is just now set out, in company with her Duana, for her country-seat. Let us transport ourselves into her apartment, and you shall see what I am able to do.

But she will know me, says I, as soon as I enter. Not in the least, answered my faithful ASTAROTH: you shall enjoy the privilege of invisibility, which is in my power to confer. No sooner shall I whisper in her ear, but your affair will be in a good forwardness. You shall make yourself visible in the evening, under a low lattice that is in the court-yard, and there have an opportunity of holding such conversation with her as I shall suggest on this occasion. The fair will soon capitulate, and you may marry her; which indeed is the only thing I can do for your worship. Nothing but HY-MEN can make you happy, supposing you will never be susceptible of jealousy; for indeed, Madam will not always be so scrupulous as she is at present.

Your humble servant, Mr DEVIL, said I: you are going to do me a great piece of service indeed, by what I perceive. Does all your devilship's skill then consist in the planting of horns on my poor head? Well, this makes it evident that all the devils are impostors and cheats, and that their greatest performances are mere juggling. Patience, Sir, patience, my demon replies.

plies: dear me, you are so hasty. When I propose marriage to you, I mean the marriage of a French petit maitre, that is, only a trick to impose on the young creature's conscience. I will place your friend, the Father Questor, just in your way this evening, and he shall give you a short benediction. Are you frightened at the name of a blessing man? This monk is no priest: consequently your marriage will not be legitimate; and when you grow weary of your bargain, I will inform you how to get rid of it. Make yourself easy then on this article: rely on me, and you shall find me a devil of my word.

When we arrived at the apartment of DONNA THERESA, we found her at her looking-glass, adjusting her head-dress, which had been rumpled by the jolting of the coach. How lovely she appeared! The HERMIT went up near her person, and blew a purple-coloured vapour into her ear, which in a moment expanded to her heart. Soon after she began to sigh, and to cry out, aloud, Heavens! What is become of him? Shall I never see him again? What a fool was I to repulse such an amiable young fellow! Alas! my severity drove him to despair. Oh that he would come again to himself! that I could have the happiness to see him once more! What would I not do to engage him? As she spoke these words, the tears were seen to trickle down her lovely eyes.

I was

I was so touched with this tender scene, that I was going, like a madman, to throw myself at her feet, if the HERMIT, who knew my sentiments, had not snatched me that moment out of the chamber, reproving me smartly, with a What now? You Frenchmen, he continued, are the most hot-headed hair-brained creatures in the universe. Why man, you had just spoiled all. What, in the name of wonder, could DONNA THERESA have thought, to have heard your voice without seeing you? She must have taken you for a mere phantom of a lover. Besides, no young lady is willing to have it known that she is in love. At a time when she professes the utmost indifference for your person, she burns with the greatest ardor to enjoy it. What a blunder for a man of wit, who aims at deceiving a woman! Are the young fellows in your country capable of committing such absurdities in love? Only have patience till the evening? You are already convinced of my little share of power; and you may be sure, this very night, of being happy, and taking possession of the castle. The lady, you know, is an only daughter, and has neither father nor mother living: her tutor may soon be brought to reason, and I will do your business effectually.

It must be imagined that I expected the happy moment with the utmost impatience. At last the hour came which I had so much desired, when I perceived DONNA THERESA leaning on a window, and venting the most profound sighs.

sighs. I sprung nimbly up towards her, and she knew me at first sight. Whence come you, Sir? she cried out with surprize; and who informed you that I was in this place? My love, Madam, answered I. The despair to which your cruelty reduced me, has made me wander the fields for a long time past; and night having overtaken me just at the gate of this castle, I got information to whom it belonged. My joys were inexpressible when I heard your ladyship named for the owner, and that you was just now arrived here. I instantly determined to try once more, if you still persist in your inclination to occasion my death. My torments are so very sharp, that I can no longer support them. My tears, my declining condition, have sufficiently informed you, that you are the only divinity I adore. The flame that consumes me is too fierce to be any longer borne. You know my family, my birth, my fortune, in a word, I have concealed nothing from you: Why then do you refuse my love? Is it so very unworthy of you, O divine THERESA? Cruel woman! See me then pierce this wretched breast, and fall a victim at your feet. Here I performed all the fooleries that are usual on such occasions. I drew my sword, which to be sure I had no great inclination to stain with my blood. DONNA THERESA, perceiving my transports, cried out aloud: For heaven's sake, dear knight, hold your hand a moment! Compose your mind, Sir, and hear me with attention.

K

I inge-

I ingenuously confess to you then, that I have conceived a sincere respect for your person ever since I first beheld you : but hearing that the French are often impostors, inconstant, and enterprising in love, I imagined that all your actions were feigned, and that you had no other design than to dishonour me. Remember, Sir, that you never once spoke to me of marriage ; which indeed was what put me on my guard. I know your family. The banker who remits your money has informed me of that, and of your own particular birth and personal merit : I freely accept your hand therefore, and shall think myself honoured in being your wife.

You ravish me, Madam, answered I with the utmost extasy. What a happy moment is this for me ! and how am I at a loss for expressions strong enough to set forth my tender love and lasting gratitude ! Be assured, Madam, that all my felicity consists in our union, and that I will not a moment defer that happiness which I prize beyond all the riches in the universe. But, dear Madam, tell me, how shall we bring about this marriage ? I have received orders from my parents to leave this place immediately, and can alledge no plausible reason for not obeying their commands. Doubtless you would be glad of their consent : but the procuring it would take up so much time, that I should certainly die in the interval.

I am not so rigorous, Sir, as you imagine, replied the charming THERESA. I believe
you

you to be a man of honour, and will entirely confide in your sincerity. Here is a good old friar just come to the house, in order to crave an alms. If he is willing to marry us, I shall be satisfied without any more formality. Please to come in, Sir, and we will speak to him together.

Here the DEVIL HERMIT took his leave of me, and told me he was going to visit his nun. You perceive, says he, that every thing goes well. It is I that have brought hither the good brother, and instructed him in what he is to perform. You must not seem to know him. Farewell, happy chevalier; this night puts you in possession of the queen of all your thoughts. I will meet you in the cave two days hence.

Scarce was I entered but I threw myself at the feet of the fair THERESA. The honest monk was immediately called. We gave him, on this occasion, the title of father; and tho' not in orders, I cannot help thinking he deserved it well; for all fathers are not priests. We opened the case to him without ceremony. The impostor dissembled most dextrously, and performed his part to admiration. The hopes of a good reward made him conceal his being unqualified, and undertake with alacrity to bless our bed. He did not spin out the ceremony to any great length. Supper was soon ready, and we had no want of appetite. After it was over, I took my full revenge on the fair THERESA for all the pangs that she had

made me suffer. Well, said I to myself, there is nothing like having a devil for one's friend. They do a man's business at once, without much fatigue or expence. Without presents, without serenades, the most hard-hearted mistress melts in a moment. Enjoyment goes hand in hand with a declaration of love, and no obstacles arise in the way.

I was so charmed with the good offices of my DEVIL HERMIT, that finding the phial of holy water in my pocket, I instantly broke it with indignation, resolving never more to make use of it against any subject of his infernal majesty. The devils, said I, are people of honour, and it would be barbarous to torment them.

T H E

THE
DEVIL HERMIT:
OR, THE
ADVENTURES
OF
ASTAROTH
BANISHED from HELL.

The SECOND BOOK.

CHAP. I.

*Sequel of the History of Sister Cornichon,
Astaroth the Duana of a young Lady of
Fifteen.*

THE delights I tasted with Donna
THERESA, did not make me forget
my friend the HERMIT. Two days
after my playing at marriage, under a pretence
of going a hunting, I fled to the cavern, where
the

the good ASTAROTH expected me with impatience. So, Chevalier, says he, as soon as he saw me; are not you a happy rogue now? The most happy dog in the universe, answered I; shewing such transport of joy, as gave him a full idea of my felicity. My dear spouse is the most obliging creature alive; and all her concern is to please me: in a word, there is no man upon earth, but might envy the felicity I enjoy.

Here the HERMIT stopped me short: I could wish, said he, that this satisfaction of yours might be lasting; but I foresee it will not. I have other things in view for you, and have chosen for your wife the daughter of a church-warden. You do not think of such a thing sure, said I smartly. What! abandon an amiable and rich lady, to marry a church-warden's daughter? Ay, Chevalier, the daughter of a church-warden; but a church-warden of the first rank; one, whose daughter shall bring to her portion a rich lordship of 300,000 livres annual rent. Well, said I, if that be the case, let us go and see her this moment.

At this ASTAROTH fell a laughing heartily: What then, said he, Donna THERESA is no longer the mistress of your heart? You are a mere Frenchman, I see, and that is saying all at once. Your countrymen never love beyond enjoyment. But have a little patience, good Monsieur; you are condemned to live a year with Donna THERESA. For three whole months she will love you; but after that,
Sir,

Sir, expect to swallow many a bitter pill of her preparing. 'Tis but just, that a sufficient quantity of vexation should follow the sweets of love, and that you should suffer a little for the insincerity you have made use of towards her, as well as for the many other amorous frolicks you have been guilty of from your birth to this hour. Some of your tricks I have heard in the cloister I came from, where, not long ago, there was a pretty young girl confined, who had been seduced by you. Come, make a frank confession of that intrigue; was it not true? Dear Mr HERMIT, said I, let my old amours alone. It makes me mad to think of the malice and artifices of those nuns. Well, well, the DEVIL replied, since you desire it, we will drop the subject: but let me tell you, that those ladies are no better pleased with you, than you with them. Your worship promised them certain little presents, such as sugar, coffee and tea, but not a grain of either ever came: it is in revenge for this that they have disposed of your mistress's heart elsewhere, and set her against you. Her present gallant has been much more generous, and you know that nuns never do any thing but for interest, but will sacrifice honour and conscience for ready money.

Well, have done with my affairs, however, answered I, and entertain me with the fortunes of that pretty nun who is under your protection, and whose history you went partly thro' before. Alas! Sir, replied my false HERMIT,
the

the poor thing has been devilishly balked. During my absence the whole affair has been discovered, and they have shut her up in a dark prison, from which I hope to release her to-morrow. I have done all in my power to give her consolation, by inspiring the means of revenge; but the simple creature was so overwhelmed with grief, that she would not hearken to my inspirations. Her misfortune happened in this manner.

This young Sister CORNICHON, as I told you before, had admitted into close quarters a great booby of a monk, who went to work without any precaution. Hardly had three weeks passed over their heads, but she felt the symptoms of a dangerous sort of cholic. Her distemper was soon discovered; for those chaste young virgins are very clear-sighted on that article. As she had many enemies, and the abbess was already prejudiced against her, she was presently locked up on suspicion of incontinency, and condemned to live on bread and water alone. All her companions raised most horrible outcries against her; yet there is not one of all the holy sisterhood, but who deserves at least as much punishment as CORNICHON.

Do but think, Chevalier, of the unhappy situation of this poor nun. A captivity the most severe and rigorous; an old passion but ill extinguished, which still gnaws her soul; vows imprudently made, which condemn her to live all her life among implacable enemies, who breathe nothing but her ruin, and are withal very ingenious

ingenious to invent a thousand calumnies, in order to satiate their vengeance. Are not these most afflicting circumstances? Few souls are capable to bear up steadily under such shocks of fortune; and the nymph, in my opinion, was worthy of commiseration. By degrees she listened to my suggestions, and I inspired her with a noble invention for her own deliverance. She has learned how to open the prison, and this night she is to set the nunnery on fire, and make her escape with the monk, who has been the chief cause of her disgrace. I must be present at this performance, and can therefore stay with you but two hours longer.—As to the Marquis of St Julian, as soon as he had heard of his mistress's misfortune, he returned to his wife, and never in the least troubled his head to relieve his once dear CORNICHON; yet it is not now six months ago, that he would have sacrificed a thousand lives for her service. Such is the inconstancy of lovers! An amiable young virgin, who has the most obliging things said to her, meets with indifference, and at last disdain, after the most tender scenes of love are once over. But let us leave off moralizing, which, indeed, is not my profession, and divert ourselves with the guardian matron, who had now lodged me.

I was such a little while in the body of this creature, that scarce had I time to know myself. But what could be the reason of that, good Mr HERMIT? said I. A fine question indeed, replied my DEVIL. The reason was, that she
knew

knew more than I, and that, besides, I had no inclination to be confined any longer. She had corrupted her young ward, a lady of great virtue, and that was all that I wanted with her. No sooner had miss and her duana fallen into disgrace, but I left them to themselves, in order that despair might compleat what I had so well begun: yet I cannot deny, but that, during the two months that I continued in the body of this fury, I performed my part very well; but when once she was shut up in a desert country castle, I presently left my habitation. To oblige you, however, I will give you an ample account of all that I performed in this my old weather-beaten habitation.

CH A P. II.

The Stratagems of Duanas; or, the History of the Count du BELAIR, and JULIA de St FLORENZO.

THE Marquis of St FLORENZO, a noble Venetian, united the most elevated sentiments with an austere, and almost savage virtue. The loss of a wife whom he valued, made no alteration in his nature, unless that it rendered him more reserved than before. Two children, a son and a daughter, the precious remains of this marriage, were all his consolation: and young FLORENZO and his

his sister had received from their virtuous parents a noble education, which directed them in the way of true glory. The old Marquis, who loved his children tenderly, was continually thinking how to procure them an advantageous settlement. His son was already possessed of a considerable employment; and such confidence had the father in his prudent behaviour, that he left him intirely to himself, persuaded that he would still tread in the steps he had marked out for him to follow.

JULIA, who was but fifteen years old, joined a noble and generous heart, a heart incapable of any thing mean, to the most exquisite beauty. Love, with all his address, had yet been unable to reach her, and his most pointed darts were blunted against the heart of this charming creature. Yet her father, notwithstanding her prudence, did not think fit to leave her mistress of her own conduct, but looked out for a duana of known probity. After much enquiry, he found one, who was recommended to him as the paragon of all Italy. The Marquis, charmed with the reputation of this old woman, whose name was FABRICIA, relied entirely upon her for the conduct of JULIA; and the time of carnival being come, he would by no means deprive this dear daughter of the diversions usually taken at Venice. Accompanied with her duana, he sent her to the house of a noble Venetian lady, whose conduct, he knew, was irreproachable. Donna THEODORA (that was her name) was so pleased with the company of
her

her lovely young guest, that she took her abroad into all the best companies, where her charms began soon to make great havock. In a little time no conversation was heard, but what turned upon the graces of JULIA's person; and there was nothing so complaisant and obliging, as what was said of her.

A young French gentleman, no less distinguished by his birth than by his amiable qualifications, had made a visit to THEODORA. He cast his eyes upon JULIA; and to see and to love were with him the same thing. A violent passion soon took possession of his soul, and determined him to omit nothing, in order to captivate the heart of this lovely creature. His assiduity, his complaisance to JULIA, gave umbrage to Madam FABRICIA, who told her sentiments to her young mistress, and asked her, if the Count had not made to her some declaration of love. JULIA sincerely confessed to her guardian all the Count's protestations of friendship and tenderness; and declared, that she never could be easy for his solicitations: but she added, at the end of her narrative, that tho' this young nobleman had an infinite deal of merit, she did not feel any thing in her heart, that gave her the least suspicion of her being ever enamoured with him.

Dame FABRICIA, whom I did not yet possess, was ravished with this declaration, and gave her fresh instructions relating to her conduct; advising her to defy all men in general, especially the French. My dear JULIA, says she,

she, they are a set of deceitful, unconstant, indiscreet people ; put no confidence in them, for they are more dangerous than a violent fever ; all their caresses are only with a view to devour.

In the mean time the Count, tormented incessantly with his passion, followed JULIA wheresoever she went. Having overheard this fine lecture of the duana, he resolved to engage her to his interest, cost what it would. Here I stepped in to his assistance, and took possession of the old woman's heart ; for, as I always had a regard for the French petits maitres, I thought it a point of honour to serve this amiable young gentleman. One day, when JULIA went with donna THEODORA to visit some of the sisters in a nunnery, the Count came to her apartments, under the pretence of paying his respects, and luckily found there dame FABRICIA alone. Ah ! Madam, says he, I am overjoyed to find you here without witnesses : I must engage your friendship in my behalf with JULIA ; deign therefore to give one moment's attention. Just at that time I filled her soul with my suggestions, and she consented to hear what the Count had to say.

Madam, he begins, I love Miss JULIA to distraction. Serve me in this particular, and depend upon the most grateful acknowledgment. You are not ignorant, chaste FABRICIA, of my birth, my rank, my fortune. I do not aim to deceive your fair mistress ; I only intreat you not to be against an honourable marriage,

L

which

which I intend to propose to her. Her alliance with me will not disgrace her: endeavour therefore to inspire her with favourable sentiments towards me. I know you have a daughter of your own, who has not fortune to recommend her to an advantageous match: bring the fair JULIA to condescend to my love, and I here give you a note of my hand for a thousand pistoles to add to your daughter's fortune, and a thousand more for your own use, to be paid as soon as the business succeeds. Be so good as to accept this small present of two hundred louis d'or. This he spoke with that grace, which is so natural to the French. Madam, he adds, I do not include this trifle in the sum promised by note, and beg you would look upon it only as the earnest of what I intend to do for you.

Dame FABRICIA, who already wept for joy at the receipt of so considerable a Sum, forgot at once all her severity, and promised the Count more than he required of her. She pocketed up the two hundred louis without much ceremony, and assured her benefactor, that he should hear from her in two days at farthest.

JULIA, at her return, found the Count waiting for her with impatience; but scarce would she vouchsafe to look on him: a cold compliment, that barely shewed her breeding, was the utmost our poor lover could extort from her. All his cringes, all his protestations of love, constancy, and fidelity, were to no purpose this evening, and could not obtain the least answer. The impression which her duana's lectures

lectures had left in her mind, was too strong for her to be imposed upon with flattering discourse, which she now regarded as made up of artifice, falsehood, and deceit. The Count had fallen into despair, but for the promises of dame FABRICIA. These revived his hopes, and enabled him to resume his natural gaiety, which was adorned with so much sprightliness and wit, as drew on him the admiration of a whole assembly. He had indeed most excellent qualities; was a man of probity and honour; but of a very amorous temper, and who would sacrifice all to accomplish his designs.

At night the duana, being alone with her ward, in a careless manner enquired, What news of the Count de BELAIR? O! says his fair mistress, that man teazes me to death with his addresses, and the ardor of his passion; but since you have told me, Madam, that the French are very perfidious and inconstant, I have scarce ever taken any notice of him. Well, but my dear JULIA, replied the matron, I have since informed myself exactly of the Count's character: his valet de chambre, who is a young fellow of good sense, has assured me, that his intentions towards you are only honourable matrimony. Now if we were sure, child, of the purity of his intentions, an alliance of that nature would raise you to a rank of high distinction. His lordship enjoys the favour of his sovereign, and possesses some of the most considerable posts in the kingdom: I believe such a husband would make you perfectly happy; for

the manner of living in France, my dear, is much more agreeable than that in Italy. Women there enjoy perfect and full liberty : jealousy is entirely banished from that happy climate : that stupid passion, which here makes many a wife unhappy, is there unknown. If the Count then does love you sincerely, and I think you have no room to doubt it, your best way, in my opinion, is to listen to his proposal, and not lose such an offer thro' an obstinate and ill grounded reserve.

But my good directress, answered JULIA, what course would you advise me to take ? Shall I expose myself to the hearing of an equivocal passion, which will tarnish my reputation ? He tells me, he loves me ; but may I rely on such a declaration ? Besides, suppose he is really in that mind at present, and that he feels all the tenderness he would make me believe, is it impossible for him to change ?

My dear daughter, replied the duana, you reason like a person of good sense : But have you not the same to fear from a husband of this country ? Disclose to me freely the sentiments of your heart ; do you not love the Count, or, at least, do you not feel a sort of favourable inclination towards him ?—I cannot but own ingenuously, governess, that this nobleman is not disagreeable to me : but I depend upon a father ; we must consult him, and take his instructions concerning my reception of the Count's addresses.—Alas ! my dear JULIA, the Count will not be forward to open his mind to the

the Marquis your father, before he is informed whether your heart feels itself disposed to favour him. A man of fine taste ought to be beholden to his own merit, and not to the orders of a father, for the good graces of his mistress. The yoke of *HYMEN* cannot be easy without mutual tenderness: therefore, child, if his love is not displeasing to you, and your heart perceives any inclination towards him, give an ear to what he has to say, and weigh his reasons; it will be time enough then to deliberate upon what course you are to take. My love and affection to you are sufficiently known; and the advice I shall give you will always be honest and rational. I have more experience of these matters than you: consult your own heart therefore, my dear *JULIA*, and repose on me the whole care of your happiness.

But, Madam *FABRICIA*, replied our lovely young lady, how would you have a prudent and virtuous virgin explain herself? I am incessantly pursued: all the assembly is attentive to our actions, and the least nod, the least glance of the eye, cannot pass unobserved.—And what then *JULIA*, rejoined the good duana, cannot you give him an interview in your own apartment? For my part, I will do what becomes me; and you may be assured, that no one living shall ever know any thing of the matter.

What is this you advise me to, Madam! exclaimed the fair *JULIA*. Shall a young lady of honour and birth expose her reputation in

that manner? If I could even suppose, that all the world would be ignorant of this clandestine visit, who can be guarantee of the Count's honour? You have told me, that all the French gentlemen are sprightly, enterprising, and of a temper not to be withstood. When I am alone with him, who shall secure me from his lawless attempts? Can I even be sure of my own steadiness and virtue? Oh, FABRICIA! one that is too daring on the sea of life, runs a great risque of being shipwrecked.—Not in the least, my dear child, answers the duana; you hazard nothing; I shall be always near you. I will do more, I will bring my daughter BEATRICE to pass the night with you: thus shall we have two witnesses, who will put a damp to all the Count's vigorous attacks, even supposing that he should be so rash, as to attempt any thing against your honour. Not that there is the least probability of such a thing, all his views being as lawful, as his respect is real and profound.—Here I whispered an artifice into the ear of the duana, which the chaste young innocent could not withstand.—Would you, says she, have me try him? I will know first if he be in earnest.—By no means, FABRICIA, replied the Marquis of FLORENZO's daughter; I cannot consent to any such proceeding.—But; my dear child, you confess, almost whether you will or no, that you do not hate this young Lord: you will be entirely wanting therefore to your own happiness and good fortune. I have something
come

come into my head, that will infallibly prevent your being exposed : hear what it is. You shall take this evening one of your brother's habits ; and I too will transform myself into a man. The Carnival allows of such liberties, and no body will censure the action. We will walk together upon St Mark's place, and endeavour to join company with him. Your severity has almost driven him to despair, and therefore we may be sure of his being alone. I will talk to you in the character you appear in ; and at the bare pronounciation of your name we shall know the sincerity of his passion.

The Duana, after much conversation, after many fair promises to be faithful, and to conduct this affair so dextrously that no one should know of it, gained her point. Poor JULIA was taken in the snare, and consented to have herself led as a victim to the slaughter. When FABRICIA had brought her so far on, she took care privately to inform the Count, who came punctually to the rendezvous. Our two adventurers appeared on the spot, where they saw the Count extremely solitary : they advanced up to him, and entered into conversation. The matron, who knew her trade perfectly well, and had me besides for an assistant, said to her counterfeit young Cavalier, Shall we go and take a glass my lord Marquis of St FLORENZO ? This was the watch word : no sooner did the count hear it pronounced, but he fetched a deep sigh ; threw off his apparent melancholy

melancholy in a moment, and became the most pleasant creature on earth. Dear Marquis, says he, how happy am I to have the honour thus accidentally of seeing you ! It is what I have a long while sought for in vain. In a word, he made him a thousand protestations of friendship and esteem ; and JULIA, who was a mere novice in love and intrigues, imagined that her face was not known to her lover under this borrowed habit. She had prepared an answer however, in case the Count had known her. This triumvirate (if we may so call it) went to the coffee house, where they were led into a private room. The duana, that she might not give donna THEODORA any uneasiness, had advised JULIA to inform her of their metamorphosis ; and as diversions of this kind are much in use, the lady had no suspicion of her conduct. She had indeed so high an opinion of the duana's virtue, that she was fully persuaded this lovely creature could run no risque with such a governess.

Here I interrupted the DEVIL HERMIT, to make him take notice of a troop of armed men, that rode with all speed towards a forest, which was half a league distant from the cavern ! Who are those People, said I ? Ah ! Chevalier, answers the Devil, they are archers, who are now in pursuit of somebody. Wait here a moment, and I will let you know their business. With that he cleft the air with an incredible swiftness, and was instantly back quite out of breath. Come along Sir, says he, these
wretches

wretches are going to your castle; they are emissaries of the holy inquisition. Yet I cannot believe they have already discovered your clandestine marriage, and sudden retreat. By all means, however, let us fly to your house, and as we are both invisible, you run no hazard. If the rascals commit any outrage, I will punish them so severely, that they shall remember it a long time. Scarce were we arrived at the castle, but these imps of the sacred office were upon the return. They had been eight days in search of the good father Questor and being informed that he lodged at my house, they came to seize his person: but as donna THERESA, for whom they had a great respect, assured them that he went away the morning before at day-break, our gentlemen took their leave.

The DEVIL HERMIT, who loved this mendicant brother, thought it his duty to inform him of that terrible tribunal, and to put him in some place of safety. In fact, within a quarter of an hour he brought him into the cavern. I could not divine, for my part, where he found the fellow: but however that was, I am sure he raised such a tempest upon the poor archers, who were coming back slowly, and sorrowful at their disappointment, that I never saw the like in my life. The thunder and lightning so terrified their horses, that they took the bit in their teeth, and ran away furiously among the woods and rocks, where most of the riders were utterly lost.

O Mr

O Mr ASTAROTH, said I, what a malignant devil art thou!—Not half so bad, answered he, as that infamous crew deserved. The inquisitor has nothing to do but to get more such; for these will now be of no use to him.—Mean time the Friar, who was almost dead with surprise, returned a thousand thanks to the HERMIT. But as his compliments were tedious and fulsome, and quite tired me, I interrupted him in the midst of them, to make ASTAROTH pursue the history of the Marquis de St FLORENZO's daughter.

CH A P. III.

Sequel to the History of the Count de BELAIR, and Miss JULIA DE FLORENZO.

THE Count, who knew that he was speaking to his mistress, and not to her brother, carried on the dissimulation with great dexterity. He uttered a thousand fine things to the counterfeit Marquis, all in language extremely flattering, and enlarged particularly on the praises of a sister of his, whom he said he had seen at the lady THEODORA's. At last he delivered himself thus: Marquis, if I was but so happy as to merit your esteem and friendship, I should prefer it to all that I possess. You seem

seem too much of a gentleman for me to be afraid of speaking my sentiments. I confess then ingenuously, that the charms of donna JULIA, your sister, have penetrated to the very bottom of my soul, and that I languish for love of her ; while the cruel maid, insensible of my torments, laughs at what I feel, and scarce will daign so much as to look on me. My family, notwithstanding, is so well known, that you cannot but be convinc'd, that yours would suffer no disgrace in an alliance with it. But alas ! adds he with a very deep sigh, I am not so happy as to engage the good graces of your adorable sister. She is already prejudiced in favour of some other gentleman, who without doubt has more merit than I. The lovely maid has indeed too many perfections, for me to imagine she would fix her eyes on any object unworthy of her ; and this single thought drives me to distraction.

As neither JULIA nor the duana made any answer, he went on in the same strain. I believe Sir, says he to the counterfeit Cavalier, that you must be convinced of the purity of my intentions. A house so illustrious as yours, is more the object of veneration, than that any one should attempt to tarnish the splendor of its glory. My views in this respect are so pure, that I would sooner sacrifice my life, than you should call them in question. I am open, sincere, and incapable of dissimulation. Dear Marquis, give me an answer with the same frankness. May I hope to possess the adorable
JULIA?

JULIA? Shall I be so happy as to have a brother-in-law of your extraordinary merit? If you refuse me your assistance, I will to-morrow take my leave of this place, and endeavour by absence to lessen the flames that now devour me. But alas! wretch that I am, I too well perceive that my whole life will be only a tissue of misfortunes and calamities, while I am absent from the most lovely JULIA. The thought of that tortures me to death. To leave a city that contains the only object on which my felicity depends! this is a martyrdom of the most exquisite sort, and what makes me tremble. For heaven's sake, Marquis, vouchsafe me a word. Can you be affected with my misery? May I flatter myself that you will be sensible of my pain?

Count, says the feigned marquis, my sister is a young lady who has never yet been in love: so much I am sure of. — That word, says the Count with a low voice, but loud enough to be understood, makes me begin to take breath.— The Marquis went on: I was ignorant, till this moment, of your inclination for her. If she has no objection to you, as I hope she has not, I shall take care to inform you of it. Depend upon me; I will spare no pains to discover her sentiments, and assist you in getting the victory over her tender heart. But I am afraid my father, who is a man of a very austere temper, will not consent to this marriage. He is intimately acquainted with a young gentleman, whom he is willing to have for a son-

-in-law. I am very certain, however, that my sister does not love him ; and have too good an opinion of my father, notwithstanding his severity, to think that he would force her to wed a man for whom she had no value.

Dear Marquis, answers the Count, how am I obliged to your goodness? You promise me your assistance, and I foretell from thence my own happiness. Here the fair JULIA, too much affected with the Count's merit, and the tenderness of his passion, betrayed herself, and could no longer support that character she had assumed. The tears, in spite of her, ran down from her lovely eyes. The wary Count took the advantage of this moment, threw himself at her feet, and declared he now knew her. This discovery at first raised a blush in the cheeks of JULIA ; but love, by degrees, insinuated with so much activity into her heart, that she fell into a fit. The care they took of her soon brought her to herself ; when she confessed to her tender lover, that he was the only motive of her metamorphosis, and that she had not exposed herself to this adventure, but in order to dive into his real sentiments.

You ought to imagine that the Count made use of his eloquence, and endeavoured by the most solemn protestations to dissipate all her doubts. Here I let a little spark of my breath fly into the very soul of JULIA ; whose heart, before too much inclined, surrendered in a moment. They swore an eternal tenderness, and contrived the means of seeing one another privately ;

M

for

for the carnival was almost at an end. For some days they had an intercourse by letters, and the too charitable Duana was the Mercury between them; but absence, after a fortnight, became insupportable to them both.

MADAM FABRICIA, with much address, managed their nocturnal interviews. She introduced the Count every night into JULIA's apartment, and that charming maid, by little and little, forgot her duty. The Count, not only promised, but resolved never to be unfaithful, and that he would try all possible means to obtain her of her father. With the consent of his mistress he made the demand himself, and at the same time employed several persons of the first rank to second his request. All was to no purpose; the old Marquis had given his word to the noble Venetian his friend, and would not be induced to go from it. His refusal plunged the fair JULIA into an inexpressible melancholy, and the good Duana was unable to moderate her sighs and complaints. All her most subtle stratagems were essayed in vain. The time of JULIA's marriage was at hand. But as it was for my interest to prevent its accomplishment, I whispered certain suspicious into the Marquis's ear: the marquis told them to his son, and they both resolved to watch over the conduct of JULIA.

One Night, perceiving the Duana to let down a silken ladder to a man, they with great attention observed the adventure, and suffered the stranger to ascend without interruption.
Then

Then passing into a contiguous hall, which had communication with JULIA's apartment, they heard enough to convince them of her ill conduct. Overcome with rage to see their house dishonoured, they rushed in like two madmen, sword in hand. The Count, who heard a noise, put himself in a posture of defence, presented two pistols that he always carried about him, and swore he would shoot them both if they refused to hear his story.

Seeing them disposed to give attention, My Lords, said he, you know me well enough to believe that my life will cost you dear. The extreme passion I have conceived for JULIA, is my whole crime, and you are not ignorant that my intention is to marry her. Your refusal, her friendship for me, and hatred of the man for whom you design her, have been the cause of these nocturnal visits. I am ready now to give her my hand. She is my wife by that reciprocal faith which we have sworn to each other. You cannot refuse her to me therefore any longer, without covering yourselves with eternal infamy. Cease to hate me; calm your fury, and be assured that I will give you proofs of my probity and honour.

The old Marquis, more capable of reflection than his son, ordered the latter to appease his wrath. JULIA and her duenna fell at the father's feet, and the tears of that lovely daughter once more touched her tender parent. Though that charming creature had never broke through the bounds of respect and submission which she owed to her

father, yet she now spoke to him with a generous boldness, and did not dissemble either her fault or her love. The father, melted into tenderness by the tears and moving words of his child, pardoned what she had done, and resolved to bestow her on her lover. The Count, transported with an event so happy, embraced the knees of the Marquis, and with repeated oaths, in the most solemn manner, declared him ready to execute his promise. In a word, the nuptial rites were concluded. Dame FABRICIA alone was the victim of this happy union: they shut her up in prison for life; and I, for my part, left the old MEGEARA to her despair, took my flight over the Alps, and thence towards the Rhine; where turning a little to the right, I came to a city famous for its waters, where I amused myself for many days in contemplation of the people then assembled. I saw there many scenes of gallantry, which I may relate to you another time; but one above the rest engaged my attention, the actors in which were a very odd sort of a couple. They were no other, (would you believe it?) than a devout rich old woman of sixty, and a gouty father-recollect who seemed yet in the prime of his years. This podagrical lump of debauchery I thought very proper to succeed the duana, and I stepped the more willingly into his soul, as the country he lived in was the very same that ASMODEUS had before driven me from.

C H A P. IV.

ASTAROTH a mendicant Friar.

TO make you understand the part I acted in this new metaphorsis, I must first give you an idea of these fellows in frock, and relate the history of him I now occupied ; for I am persuaded you are not so well acquainted with these people as I am. These bigots, for the most part, rise out of the dunghill ; and the meanness of their extraction makes them run into all the most shameful disorders. Incapable of fine sentiments, they deliver themselves up to an infamous course of debauchery. Drunkenness, gluttony, and luxury, are their favourite virtues. Under the vail of a monstrous hypocrisy, they hide the most filthy inclinations. They sacrifice the most sacred mysteries of the religion they profess to a sordid interest ; they varnish over the greatest crimes of those, who know how to win them with suitable presents : there are no secrets which they will not reveal, when they meet with a generous man, who pays them largely : in a word, they sell the graces of heaven annexed to their ministry, with as little scruple, as a Jew would make merchandise of a Christian. A character so scandalous, and so unworthy of a good man, is indeed the true character of a Demon : I lived at large therefore in the soul of this honest monk, as if I

had been in the best apartment of all the infernal state. In fact, he passed, and I believe with justice, for the most crafty and the most debauched fellow of his whole order. He was born in Ireland; and there could not be two better qualities, to make a perfect imp of ASMO-DEUS, than those of Irishman and mendicant friar. During the twenty years that he had wore the habit, he never once belied his character: and as a bad man always grow worse and worse, he was now sunk to the lowest degree of libertinism. An idea of his life will make this truth more apparent.

The remarkable History of a Recollect Friar.

THIS man was born at Cork, of a mother whose gallantry had made as much noise as her beauty. As this courtesan had never submitted to the yoke of HYMEN, and always entertained a number of gallants at the same time, it was impossible to tell who was his father. However, a young merchant of that city, to whom the honour of owning him was given, took care of him till he was ten years old, and then sent him over to Holland. Want and debauchery in time reduced him to herd with a troop of banditti, who conducted him into Flanders, there he associated with some Bohemians, and lived among them two years: but justice having dissipated this gang, he escaped into a village of the neighbouring country, where

where he met with an honest recollect, who introduced him into his convent. The good father, finding him a young man of hopeful inclinations, taught him a few words of Latin, and in a little time after gave him the frock. Our spark, naturally licentious arrived by degrees at the most eminent pitch of wickedness. It would take up too much time to relate all the infamous actions that blackened his character: a few examples must suffice to give you some specimen of it.

In spite of his crimes, he had learned to contract such a hypocritical air, that it enabled him to impose on all the world. His grave deportment, his seemingly solid turn of mind, acquired him the esteem of an infinite number of people of all ranks. A person of quality, who lived in the neighbourhood, was so fond of him, that he took him to be the director of his whole family. His power in the gentleman's house was quite despotic. This lord had a handsome young wife: the friar fell in love with her, and resolved to enjoy her. As he was high in the good graces of madam's chambermaid, he made her the confidant of his passion. JAN-
NETON, that was the damsel's name, compassionated the good man's sufferings, and promised to introduce him one night into her mistress's apartment, while her master was busy in answering some letters that he had received by an extraordinary courier. No sooner did she perceive madam to be in a profound sleep, but she accordingly brought in the monk, who
slipped

slipped dexterously into her bed, and satiated his infamous desires. The dame, whom his brutality soon awakened, fearing her husband might do himself harm, begged him to abate a little of his vigour ; and the game being over, she innocently dropt asleep again. The monk then retired highly satisfied.

About four hours after this scene comes the nobleman to bed, when his lady awaking once more at the noise, and knowing him by the light, asked him if he was not well, and for what reason he had got up. The husband told her she certainly dreamed, for that he had not yet been in bed, having been kept up so long about his letters. How, says she, have not you been in my apartment since supper ? Indeed Madam, replied he, I have not. Here the unhappy lady fetched a deep sigh, and began to suspect what had been done: she dissembled the matter however till next day, in order the better to come at the truth. She had before entertain'd some suspicion of the monk. Certain amorous glances, certain equivocal discourses, had persuaded her that this wretch was a very debauchee, who coloured over his crimes with an affected hypocrisy. She had several times communicated her sentiments to her husband : but he, far from giving attention to her prudent advice, rejected it as the effect of rash judgment. Several times she made him take notice of the licentious manners of this friar, and his private conversation with her chambermaid : but the gentleman was so prejudiced in his favour,

vour, that he construed every thing into an innocent amusement, and seemed resolved to be the dupe of our scoundrel Hiberian.

Next day the poor lady, tho' perfectly innocent, was tortured with the most gnawing remorse. Having been informed that the friar went away betimes in the morning, she took JANNETON aside, in order to extort the secret from her. She thought that stratagem would be the best way to come at it; and accordingly she deceived her by a false confidence. She asked her why father ANDREW (that was the friar's name) went away so early without taking his leave? To which the subtle wench readily answered, that he had told her the evening before that he was obliged to go to the city betimes in the morning, about an affair of consequence. Alas! said the lady, with a pitiful tone, I am very sorry for it; I had something to communicate to him. But I know, JANNETON, that you are discreet, and love me very much: May I run the hazard of trusting you with the secrets of my heart?

Alas! Madam, says the damsel, can you doubt of my attachment to you? Believe me when I say, I would sacrifice a thousand lives to serve you. Never hesitate a moment therefore about opening your heart to me. — Well then, JANNETON, I frankly confess to thee that I am passionately in love with father ANDREW: but he is so holy a man, and so perfectly pious, that I am afraid he would reject my ardor with indignation. I dare not give him any hint of my passion: the
remains

remains of modesty hinder me. Oh, my dear JANNETON! how shall I be obliged to thee, if thou canst make him sensible of my torment. — The scene ended with a few counterfeit tears which madam let fall to impose upon her Abigail.

This contrivance succeeded to her wish. The chambermaid, deceived by appearances, fell without reflection into the snare, and cried out, In troth, madam, you may make your self easy: you are not so well acquainted with the father as I am. I dare assure you, he will not be unsusceptible of love. For my part, I have no reason to complain of him. He has a tender heart, I am sensible of it, and it is not his fault that we have not****.

My dear JANNETON, continues the lady, do not deceive me. I cannot persuade myself that father ANDREW, who talks of nothing but the love of God, fasting, penitence, and discipline, would forget his duty, to give ear to my foolish passion. You mistake holy friendship for gallantry; and he only tried thee the better to sound thy soul. I am not mistaken Madam, replied JANNETON: take my word for it, he will think himself at the summit of happiness when he hears of your kind dispositions towards him. — Never tell me so girl, the lady retorted; I can by no means flatter myself with such hopes. Thou hast a mind to nourish my flame, and thy tenderness makes thee deceive thyself. — Lord Madam, JANNETON replies, how incredulous you are! Well then, since I must tell you all, know that

that last night, while my master was writing, I conducted father Andrew at his own request into your apartment, where, by taking the place of your husband, he obtained your favours.

Scarce had she spoke these words when the lady, pierced to the very heart, screamed out aloud, and fell into a fit. Her husband, hearing her, fled to her relief; but it was with the utmost difficulty that he brought her again to herself. As he most passionately loved her, her dismal situation almost drove him mad, and drew from him such outcries, as made the whole castle ring. In the mean time madam began to recover, and looking upon her lord, who was dissolved in tears. My dear husband, says she, cease your sorrow, calm those transports, and leave a miserable woman, unworthy of you, to die. A villain has deceived you, under a veil of the most horrible hypocrisy: he has this night polluted your bed. Think no more of your wife, who is absolutely lost to you.

Alas! Madam, replies the gentleman all in confusion, what is the meaning of this language? It has already thrown me into the most violent disorder. For heaven's sake explain yourself, and tell me the subject of your sorrow. The lady, without hesitation, related the horrid stratagem which the monk had made use of, to rob her of her honour. The waiting-woman, more than half dead with fear, was obliged to confess her crime, and her own lascivious commerce with this unworthy father. Then the unhappy

py gentlemen was sensible of his whole misfortune: but reflecting that his wife was entirely innocent, he endeavoured by caresses to comfort her, and mitigate her transport of grief. Nothing however was capable to calm her mind: a violent fever seized her, which in four or five days carried her off. The gentleman, though distracted with anguish, thought it prudent not to divulge this tragical story, and contented himself with cloistering up the waiting-woman, without making any noise. Since that time he languishes through a melancholy life, and receives no consolation for the loss of his dear lady. The monk had no mind to return to the castle; certain domesticks having informed him of the lady's death, and what was the cause of it. But, far from being touched with remorse, and living better for the future, he has followed the same course ever since.

An adventure happened to him about a year ago, which is very remarkable. He preached during Lent in a country village, and lodged with a rich farmer who had a very handsome daughter. Already had he tried every wile to corrupt this young girl, without being able to succeed. She had long been contracted to a youth of her own rank, and the marriage was to be celebrated in the Easter holidays. Father ANDREW waited with impatience for this ceremony, in hopes it would prove favourable to him. He was not deceived. There was a great entertainment made on the wedding-day, when our hyyocrite refused to come into so
much

much merry company, and chose rather to sup alone in his chamber.

While they were dancing after supper, the good father examined carefully the bridal chamber, which, luckily for him, was separated from his only by a thin fir-tree partition. He very dextrously took out a board, that he might get in after the bride. No sooner had they conveyed her to the nuptial bed, but the monk, who listened all the while, understood that the bridegroom continued longer with the company. Upon this the good father crept into the chamber, and fairly took his place by the side of his young wife: but scarce had he attempted to execute his design, before she perceived he was not the man she had married, and screamed out so loud, that all the company ran to her assistance. The audacious monk, who did not expect this discovery, had no time to escape. The husband, a strong vigorous young fellow, flew at him like a fury, and gave him such a hearty drubbing, that he was obliged to be carried home to his monastery, where he lay two months before he got cured of the blows he received.

It was not eight days before I took possession of him, that he had corrupted a young girl, who waited on a countess that was taking the waters in this city. Imposed upon by his hypocrisy, the wench addressed herself to him for her confessor. After a severe reprimand, he ordered her, by way of penitence, to wear a cord upon her naked skin. Nay more, says he,

N

it

it is necessary that I should put it on you myself. The poor simple creature made no resistance, but admitted him into her chamber to execute his own sentence. As the girl was pretty, she tempted his fleshly part; and he so well set forth his case, that he obtained his desire. This adventure was never known; and well for him that it was not: for if the old devotee had been informed of it, she would have loaded him with reproaches, as he had sworn to her an invariable fidelity.

While he continued at the waters, I inspired him to perform several legerdermain tricks. Among others he stole the purse of a German Count, who put the utmost confidence in him. His devotee was concerned in the plot, and concealed the theft. This affair having made some noise, I advised him to get away; which he did very prudently: for after much enquiry it was found out that he was the thief. But the good German never attempted to prosecute him, for fear of scandalizing his order: an example that of the most christian moderation!

Being return'd to his convent, he lodged in the hands of his guardian, the money he had got, and related to him the stratagem he had put in practice to make it his own. The good superiour laughed at the adventure. You have done well, said he; this money might have been employed to profane purposes, whereas now it will be consecrated to the service of god. An excellent sacrifice! said I to myself. Without question it will be very agreeable to the supreme
being,

being, who accepts no victims, but what is holy and innocent.

Scarce had I been a fortnight in the monastery, before I was surprized at the frightful disorders that reigned there. One may justly call this retreat a real cavern of vagabonds, who are all attentive to glut themselves by preying on the publick. With infinite pleasure every morning I saw a croud of pretty young girls arrive there, who made no scruple of sacrificing their honour to these wretched hypocrites. After dinner every one took his flight, in order to go and gourmandise with some bigot of a burgher, who regaled them with great pleasure, merely to have a share in their prayers. I laughed as if I had been mad, at these ridiculous mummeries.

With regard to my fleshly tabernacle, he divided his day always between his devotee, and a pious ecclesiastick, whom he was conducting a great pace towards perdition, by inspiring him with a thousand scruples capable of driving him to despair. He talked to him of nothing but hair-shirts, macerations, fasts, and austerities: and, as it signifies little to us devils in what manner we get human souls, provided they come to us safe, I inspired my monk with such moving discourses, that the unhappy priest doubted of his salvation, and at last ran to despair in earnest.

The afternoon he spent with his old devotee, in making delicate collations, and satiating his beastly concupiscence. However, notwithstanding this voluptuous life, I began to be uneasy

in the soul of this hypocrite ; so that, having resolved to quit it, I only waited to be first revenged on that scoundrel, secretary **URIEL**. I had seen him several times, but without any inclination to make myself known. You have heard before how that devil sold and betrayed me to **ASMODEUS**. I was not ignorant, that his principal support was that little bigot of a capuchin, the evil genius of the sovereign ; and having, besides, a mortal hatred against all the people of that order, I was wholly determined on vengeance. I engaged my good host to debauch a pretty young girl who came to confession, and who was not able to resist the power of my temptation. In a word, he played his part with her so well, that the poor wench found an alteration in her health ; and, upon the importunity of her parents, confessed, that Father **ANDREW**, her director, was the man that did it. Her father, who had access to the person of the prince, went thither with his complaints. Soon after Father **ANDREW** was cited, by the sovereign's command, before the venerable consistory, where the little capuchin was to give him a severe reprimand in his highness's name.

My individual could not bear the admonition with good temper. He answered insolently, and I insensibly inspired him with a most violent passion. In his rage he fell like a madman on the poor capuchin, and treated him in such a piteous manner, that he lay for dead. All the court, upon this, was alarmed. The prince, informed

formed how the man he loved like another self, had been assaulted, ran in person to the place, and ordered the good Father ANDREW to be locked up in a dark prison. No sooner was he secured, but I made my escape out of his body, and took my flight towards the middle region of the air, where I wandered the space of two or three years, without knowing in what place to fix. I caused abundance of havock in many countries; but at last, having visited several remote kingdoms, I alighted upon the Grand Signior's Seraglio. I saw there the chief of the black eunuchs, walking in the gardens with the favourite sultana, and instantly took up my lodging within him.

How much pleasure soever I received in the conversation of my false HERMIT, I could not help thinking for ever of donna THERESA. I found in her charms which seemed to secure her from all danger of my inconstancy, and communicated my thoughts on that subject to my good friend ASTAROTH. You are newly married, says he, with a smile, and your flame continues fierce: it would not be just to restrain it too much. Go home then to your dear moiety, whose desires are not less ardent than yours; but remember always, that I am ready to serve you with fidelity, and without any self-interest; which is more than can be said of many of your own species, who think disinterestedness a superfluous virtue. When you desire to receive any farther instructions, you need only repair again to this cave, where I

will appear to you upon regular summons. So let it be, said I, taking my leave; I will be with you again in eight days, at the farthest; depend upon my grateful acknowledgment, as I rely upon the sincerity of your promises.

CHAP. V.

ASTAROTH Chief of the Grand Signior's Eunuchs. The tragical End of the Brother Questor.

I Need not relate here all that passed between my wife and I: let the reader imagine what two persons, whose love was tender and mutual, and who possessed one another without fear, would say and do. Eight days passed over with rapidity. My felicity, however, could not make me forget my faithful ASTAROTH: according to the promise I had made him, I came to the cave, where I was very much surprized to find him employed in burying our dear brother the Questor. During the absence of ASTAROTH, a serpent had glided under his frock, as he slept, and bit him grievously. The poison of this animal was so subtle, that he died an hour after; and the HERMIT just came back time enough to find him alive.

You must have been busy indeed, ASTAROTH, says I, to be thus ignorant of the misfortune
fortune

fortune of your intimate friend. Neither busy, answered he, nor ignorant of what had happened: but the course of his holy life was at an end, and it was impossible for me to preserve him from the shears of the fatal sister.—Be so good, Lord HERMIT, replied I, as to relate to me the adventures of this poor brother.—I am very willing to do it, Chevalier, rejoined my trusty friend: but I inform you before hand, that they are not over-diverting. I will abridge them therefore, as much as possibly I can.

Father PANCRACIO, that was the name of this worthy brother, owes his being to a rope-dancer of the city of Naples, and a Turkish slave, the daughter of a bashaw of Romelia. His mother was taken captive by a Neapolitan galley, and given to the vice-roy's lady; but falling in love with this rope-dancer, she eloped from her mistress, fled with him into the village of Pugliai, where young PANCRACIO first saw the light. He was brought up in his father's profession, and grew eminent, not only for his agility of body, but more for his dexterity in showing flight-of-hand tricks. The ignorant vulgar, who could not comprehend certain natural secrets he was master of, soon began to look upon him as a dangerous person, who held correspondence with infernal spirits. Certain philtres that he gave having succeeded, all the young rakes had recourse to him, to enable them to triumph over the indifference of their cruel

cruel mistresses. One among them having been accused of the murder of a citizen's daughter, who had recourse to law to make him marry her, was taken up, and condemned to an ignominious death. In his examination he accused Signior PANCRACTIO, who, upon advice thereof, made his escape to Bologna, and got admission into a convent at Soccolanti. After his noviciate, he was employed in the questure, that is, in going about to beg for the rest of the fraternity. His juggling talents got him access into the principal houses of Bologna : but having abused a young lady of distinction, he was arrested by the hand of justice.

His superior claimed him back, and they set him again at liberty. He had an interview with his fair one, and gave her certain remedies, that caused her dropsy to disappear. Her relations, who had proceeded only on suspicions, were obliged, when the symptoms vanished, to make him reparation for the disgrace. His credit by this was so restored, that he even passed for a martyr of calumny ; and the affair, which made a great deal of noise, having turned to his advantage, he continued to live in his former way. He got considerable sums by providing for young virgins, who panted after the loss of their honour. Not a stranger ever escaped him. He continually visited all the inns, to see who was newly arrived, in order to become procurer to their diversions. But some days ago, an old hag, his
associate

affociate in the juggling art, having been taken up for a witch, by order of the inquisition, accused this poor brother of practising the same charms; and, but for me, he had become the victim of that formidable tribunal. The rest of his life is very well known. At this instant the good father PANCRACIO possesses a high employment in our kingdom, and is more happy than I, who would gladly be in his place. But, as we were not now talking of what we wish for, let us proceed to some other subject.

After this discourse my faithful ASTAROTH requested me to give him an account of my conduct towards donna THERESA. I loved him too well to dissemble with him; but being more curious to learn the particulars of his life, than to relate how I had passed my own time, I soon engaged him to resume the thread of his adventures, which he continued almost in these words.

As I told you before, I roved in the air about three years. During that time I ravaged many a province, and put many a poor family into confusion; among which latter was that of la CADIERE. It was I that inspired them with all the proofs of that scandalous prosecution, which was set on foot to destroy Father GIRARD, and ruin his reputation with the publick. It was not my fault that he escaped the hands of justice; for the proofs against this good director were in appearance so persuasive, that I am still astonished, they did not bear him down: yet I must own to
you,

you, between friends, that he was only guilty of a few slight indiscretions, such as among other people would have past for mere trifles. But as those of his order are mortal enemies to the Quesnelists, and as I favour that species of sectaries, I set every engine to work to tarnish the glory of that society, which, in reality, is the scourge of hell.

I sometimes insinuated myself into the company of learned men, and those master wits, who decide of all writings with an insupportable presumption. I rambled thro' all the coffee-houses, to preside in the disputes there. One day I fomented such a furious quarrel between two authors, that they could not compromise it without a good number of blows, which they mutually interchanged with each other.

One was a historian of the first rank, who maintained, by sound arguments, that *the Chinese letters* were well writ, and might be ranked with the best productions of the age. He praised the author of them extremely, and put him in competition with the most illustrious writers. These encomiums, I must own, seemed a little extravagant.

The other, on the contrary, who was only an insipid compiler, quite empty of all that is called erudition, was obstinately resolved to run him down. He threw out a thousand invectives against the author. Every one laughed in this fellow's face, and ridiculed his ignorance. Seeing himself become the object of contempt,

contempt, he leaps like a madman upon the Marquis d'ARGENS's panegyrist. The latter returned the affront, and, I believe, if they had not been parted, they would have strangled each other.

But tell me, said I, dear Lord HERMIT, you who set up for a wit, and a perfect connoisseur in literary matters, tell me without prejudice, what is your opinion of that author and his works? As to my own sentiments, Sir, answers ASTAROTH, I own to you ingenuously, that it is just the same with his who made the encomium; and I believe, that all those who have any taste of science, will ever allow that writer the praises he deserves. He has talents worthy of the highest esteem; and one may say of him, without injustice, that he is an original. He thinks with great delicacy: it is only to be wished, that he had more leisure to correct his writings; but his productions are too numerous for him always to avoid some repetitions: this defect, however, may claim pardon in a man, who is obliged to write two sheets a-week: there are not many authors capable of doing so much with so few faults.

Besides, his deficiency on this head is so amply made up, by his fine and delicate reflections, that it will not be surprizing to see the Chinese letters meet with a general approbation. It is what, I am sure, I heartily wish; for the man is one I very highly respect: his way of living pleases me; and if he had any
occasion

occasion for my assistance, I would leave all to serve him; but as he is already under the protection of ASMODEUS, I am not such a fool as to meddle with his person. I should have no thanks, I am sure, for my labour.

Friend ASTAROTH, cried I, interrupting him, I beg you to have done with that author. He is a crack-brained fellow, that runs from subject to subject: he spares neither heaven nor earth; and, as much a devil as you are, you would find it difficult to secure yourself against some strokes of his pen, if he did but hear you once mention his name. What a simpleton art thou! says ASTAROTH, and burst out in a laugh. Be so good as to inform me, Chevalier, what he could have to say against the devil? Are you unacquainted with our reputation in your hemisphere? All the civil things imaginable are spoken of us. Besides, the marquis we are mentioning, is hand to glove with us infernals: we give him his inspirations; and of all the inhabitants of the earth he is chief in PLUTO's favour. All his fine sentiments against the fathers, and other the most learned men, which are so much admired in his works, are so many small marks of his gratitude to ASMODEUS, his protector, and ambassador from our sovereign to his noble person.

ASTAROTH was going on: if I had given him ever so little room, he would have entered upon a detail that might have lasted, perhaps, till this time. He had already begun the
history

history of the marquis and his heroine, when I intreated him to remit his narrative to another opportunity. Friend ASTAROTH, cried I again, I beseech you to let this author alone; a day will not be sufficient for me to hear half his adventures in: rather inform me of what passed in the seraglio.—Have patience a moment, Chevalier, and you shall be satisfied. An affair is just now come into my head, which is of no small importance. I will not be long gone; but I must by all means take a turn to the city. The inquisitor is upon the point of expiring, and I have not a moment to lose.

These last words were scarce out of his mouth, but my DEVIL HERMIT disappeared like a flash of lightening. He had not been absent however above twenty minutes, before he came back capering like a mad creature. His joy proceeded, as he informed me, from his having learned, that four of his infernal brethren had already seized the old monk, and were carrying him in triumph down to the regions of damnation. The HERMIT was so transported at the very news of this prize, that for above an hour he was ready to burst himself with laughter. At last, when his rapture was a little abated, he told me, that, from the foundation of the inquisition till that time, they had never missed one of those people. As I was not at all surprized to hear that, I could not but wonder at his immoderate joy; but not daring to ask him any more questions

on that head, for fear of being pestered with a long recital, which I already knew the general contents of, I chose rather to let him alone to his own extravagancies. This complaisance had all the success I hoped for. He by degrees came quite to himself, and calmly proceeded to rehearse to me the part he had performed in the Ottoman court.

CHAP. VI.

Intrigues in the Grand Signior's Seraglio.

DOUBTLESS you are not ignorant, the HERMIT began, that the chief of the black eunuchs is possessed of one of the principal employments of the Ottoman empire; that he enjoys all the Grand Signior's confidence, and is respected and feared, not only in the palace, but in all the states dependant on the Porte: even the Sultanas take the utmost pains to engage his good will, persuaded that his recommendation is of great weight to get them regarded by the Sultar, and procure them a share in his favours. As this is what they all pant after with the utmost impatience, they spare neither flattery nor complaisance, to make a friend of this prime minister of his pleasures; who is, in a word, the arbiter of the happiness or misery of five or six hundred women, that are shut up in

in the palace. He alone governs them, and procures them what little liberty they enjoy ; for without him they could have no hope of ever sleeping out of their apartment. They cannot even walk in the garden, unless they have his leave : when they have the misfortune therefore to displease him, they must submit to a severe slavery, which often plunges them in the most fatal despair.

As your great beauties are usually very much inclined to love, I had room here to exercise my charity. Very far from putting on a severe and barbarous deportment, I dexterously insinuated, that I would do all in my power to assist them in carrying on, and concealing their intrigues. Surprized at this change, they thought at first, that I was endeavouring to ensnare them : for before my entrance into the soul of this man, he treated them all with great rigour and inhumanity. By little and little, however, they banished all suspicion from their hearts. At one time I artfully conveyed to them billet-doux, and carried back their answers ; at another, I introduced in the night certain bold young fellows into the gardens, where I secretly brought to each of them one of the Sultanas. This behaviour to them made me gradually the object of their adoration. I was under no apprehension of a surprize, because I could render them invisible, or fascinate the eyes of all overlookers. Many Jews, to whom I gave free admission, under pretence of coming to sell their toys,

not only obliged the fair prisoners themselves, but procured them other assignations. I was consulted on every occasion, and always appointed to have time and place of rendezvous.

A young Greek of distinguished merit, whose name was ZAIDE, possessed entirely the Sultan's heart; but this lady, who was but lately come into the seraglio, could not bear the transports of his love. She thought of nothing but the loss of her liberty. About four or five months before, she was taken prisoner by a corsair of Algiers, who sold her to a Turkish Aga. As her beauty was matchless, the Aga made a present of her to the Grand Signior, who, at first sight, became desperately in love with the fair slave. But in vain did he pursue her with presents and caresses; she seemed insensible to them all. The captivity of the seraglio filled her with horror: her religion heightened her fear, and drove her into a destructive melancholy: her heart at the same time burned with a violent passion, which gave her no repose. I resolved to assist this unhappy fair, and restore her to her lover, who had made a voyage to Constantinople, in order to redeem her out of servitude: I concealed my sentiments however, and tried every effort to gain her confidence, by giving her from time to time some news of her dear IBRAHIM (that was the name of this unhappy young man.) I had an express order from the Sultan to endeavour gain her affections; but, far from serving him, I gave her a frightful idea of his capricious and tyrannical

tyrannical humour. By these means I insensibly acquired her good-will. But before I proceed with this narrative, I must give you some account of an event which made a great deal of noise all over Europe; I mean the arrival of Count BONNEVAL at the Porte.

Count BONNEVAL? said I; I have heard much talk of him: he has sullied his reputation, by submitting to be circumcised. Public fame indeed reports, that the man never had any religion; the Mahometan heresy, therefore, may be the same thing to him, as the pure doctrine of JESUS CHRIST. You are misinformed, Chevalier, answered the hermit. Mr de BONNEVAL has never abandoned christianity: that is only a calumny published by his enemies, in order to render him odious. Hear me with attention, and you shall be convinced of what I say: I will inform you of certain circumstances, which are unknown to almost all the world.

A fortnight after my arrival at the seraglio, it was publickly said all over Constantinople, that the Count de BONNEVAL was come to offer his services to the Grand Signior. Transported with the thought of being acquainted with a man, of whom fame had published so many different things, I waited with impatience for the Sultan to give him an audience. But the Porte was in no such great hurry; the policy of that court does not permit it to grant favours of that importance, without mature deliberation. It was a full month, before

he could obtain any admission; they assigned him, however, in the mean time, a pension sufficient to support him with credit.

The Bashaw of Scio, his particular friend, and who solicited this audience, had many interviews with the Grand Vizir and the Mufti. The point insisted on was, that the Count should suffer himself to be circumcised, to make him the more agreeable to the Emperor, and procure his favour; but M. de BONNEVAL constantly opposed this proposition, and never would listen to it with the least countenance. It is even certain, that he was upon the point of leaving the Ottoman court, and continuing his journey to Persia, which obliged the Vizir to press the Grand Signior to grant the so-much-desired audience.

In the different conversations he had with the principal officers of the Porte, the Count artfully gave them to understand, that it was dangerous to require such a step from a man of honour; that whoever is capable of sacrificing his religion to court-favour and interest, deserves no confidence; and that therefore they ought to excuse his resistance on this head, as that resistance was a proof that he was incapable of forfeiting his integrity; that his fidelity to the Ottoman Emperor should not be inferior to what he had shewn to other potentates, whose crying injustice towards him, had obliged him to abandon their service.

At last, after many delays, his highness determined to give him a private audience; and,
in

in order to dazle the eyes of the people, it was published all over Constantinople, that the Count had embraced the Mahometan faith, and submitted to be circumcised. In the third volume of the *memoirs*, which are sold under his name, you may read all the circumstances of this ceremony; his disputes with the Imans sent by the Mufti to instruct him; his kind of exile into a remote province, of which he was nominated governor; his retreat into an old castle, situate near Calcedon; all which are mere forgeries, the inventions of the honest author, either to give some variety to his book, or to sully the Count's reputation. Those who know the country he speaks of, will see at first glance, that the writer has given us gratis all these adventures, and that he was not even acquainted with the map of the country; for the castle he makes him inhabit so long after, was demolished in the year 1719. The history of the dervise is not in the least more probable. These Turkish monks never live in the houses of great men; nor is marriage at all prohibited among them. The author had made this novel much more plausible, if he had attributed it to a fanton; for the fantons never marry, and are frequently received into the principal families of the Porte, in the quality of almoners.

The arrival of his three mistresses at Constantinople is not less fabulous. The same may be said of all the instructions that he gives to the divan. His English and German ladies
both.

both died in the year 1726: and it is certain that if he had made those fine discourses before the divan, which we see in his memoirs, there would never have been a word of them known out of that assembly. Every one there, is obliged to keep inviolably secret all that passes, under the penalty of certain death. As I was present at all the audiences that were granted him, I may be the more depended upon for an account of them, than any man living.

The Grand Signior received him in a gracious manner, vouchsafed him his protection, and ordered him to examine his troops. Some time after he had a commission to discipline them after the manner of the Europeans, in which he succeeded perfectly well. He prevailed on the Grand Vizir to receive all foreigners, who were skilled in the military art, without constraining any man to alter his religion. His reasons were well relished; so that he formed a body of troops, 20,000 strong, who were able to make head against the same number of any nation in Christendom. About three months after his arrival at the Porte, an adventure happened to him that had like to have been his destruction; out of which, however, he extricated himself with great dexterity.

An Iman, very zealous for his sect, hoping to do a meritorious work, and which would draw down on him the benediction of Mahomet, determined to lay a snare for him, to oblige him to embrace the religion of the Ottomans. He had a daughter of great beauty, whom he engaged.

engaged in the project. Every one knows, that when a Christian has once had any commerce with a Turkish woman, he has no other way to save his life but by turning Mahometan. This Iman was one of the two that had been sent by the Mufti. He had since that time contracted a friendship with the Count, and engaged him on several occasions to come to his own house. He even gave him admission into his Haram; a very particular favour, which is seldom granted. ROXA (that was the name of the Iman's daughter) had orders to display all her charms before the Count. That lord admired and praised her beauty; but took not the least step that might indicate he had any affection for her. This was the utmost mortification to her father.

One day, under a pretence of taking a walk, she threw herself full in his way, attended with only one female slave. The Count had no suspicion: he received her with all the politeness imaginable, and introduced her into his apartment without the slave. The Iman, well acquainted with what his daughter was doing, came in immediately upon them, as it were to pay a visit; and expressing his astonishment to find her alone with the Count, he made a terrible outcry, and assured BONNEVAL that if he did not turn Mahometan, and marry his daughter, he would sacrifice him to his vengeance. It was in vain that the Count protested he had not infringed the bounds of decency; all his asseverations were disregarded. The
Iman

Iman carried his complaints to the Musti. As the affair was serious, and of great consequence, this chief of the mussulman law endeavoured to win over the Count by a thousand promises, in case he would submit to circumcision: but finding him invincible, the Turk ordered him to be arrested. BONNEVAL heard of this order, and suddenly secreted himself from the publick, taking refuge with a Greek that was his friend. He was above a month concealed in the house of this Christian.

After many fruitless enquiries, the Grand Signior, vexed at having lost a man of merit, ordered a declaration to be published, by which he promised pardon to the Count, and swore by his turban that no insult should be offered him. Immediately the Count appeared again, obtained a private audience, and fully justified his own innocence. ROXA, being summoned, was obliged to confess the whole truth, and that her love for BONNEVAL was all her crime. In a word, she wrought so much on the Count by her amorous protestations, that she engaged him to marry her. The divan, in order to punish her father, fixed her portion at twenty purses of gold. It was at this time that he retired to a fine house, near Scutari, upon the Bosphorus, and not to an old castle, as the author of his memoirs has falsely asserted.

Let us return to ZAIDE, the fair Greek who had captivated the Sultan's heart. This unhappy virgin suffered the most cruel persecutions,
not

not only from the Grand Signor, but from the Sultanas, who, jealous at seeing themselves supplanted by this stranger, did all in their power to torment her. They left no artifice untried, to make her lose the affection of his Ottoman highness. They invented the blackest calumnies to asperse her conduct. These severe trials so impaired her health, that she fell into a violent fever, which threatened her life. The sultan was extremely alarmed; he waited on her night and day. In spite of all the prejudices the Sultan's women had endeavoured to fill him with, he appeared still to be desperately in love with ZAIDE: which so irritated the Sultana Valide, that she resolved to poison her; and had effected it but for my prevention. I now discovered myself to the fair unhappy Greek, and assured her of her liberty as soon as her strength was re-established. She gave credit to my words, and this good news abated the violence of her distemper. In a little time she was able to go through the fatigues of a long and toilsome voyage: and as I had formed a resolution to quit the seraglio, because one of the Sultan's wives, whom he had never touched, proved with child, I executed my project without delay.

I sent instructions to ZAIDE's lover, who still continued at Constantinople, touching the time and manner of carrying off his mistress. When all was ready, I conveyed the fair Greek into a felucca that waited for her, where IBRAHIM received her with inexpressible transports
of

of joy. Without interruption they passed Dardinel castles, and arrived at Smyrna without the least accident ; and from thence embarked for Venice.

Z A I D E's elopement having driven the Grand Signor almost to despair, he formed a design of putting part of the women, and all the black eunuchs, to the examination. At that very time the tidings was brought him of the infidelity of the pregnant Sultana. No longer did he defer his resentment, but that instant ordered thirty of his wives to be sewed up in leathern bags, and thrown headlong into the canal. The chief eunuch, and twenty of his inferiors, were beheaded. As for me, when I saw my individual loaded with irons, I made my escape out of his body, and passed over into Italy, where wandring through this desert, I saw an old hermit at the point of death. Loth to lose so fair an opportunity, he had no sooner breathed his last, but I put on his habits, and took possession of his hermitage.

Such have been my adventures, Sir, down to this time. I will finish my narrative with the history of Z A R A You will not, I believe, be sorry to hear the misfortunes of that beautiful Greek.

C H A P. VII.

*The History of Z A R A, and J U L I A N
C O R N A R O.*

THE Family of CORNARO has ever been greatly distinguish'd among the Venetian nobility. It has not only given many doges to the republick, but also brave commanders, and the most consummate politicians. Of later years indeed, since it has been greatly multiplied, there have issued from it some branches, that have found themselves in a very middling situation: so that JULIAN CORNARO, descended from one of these branches, was much more estimable for his merit than for his riches. To a very advantageous figure, he added a mind extremely well cultivated. As study had been always his chief occupation, he arrived to a degree of science that made him admired by all his fellow citizens.

An inclination to travel, so natural to a young man, having got possession of his soul, he had leave from his parents to pass into Dalmatia, to an uncle of his that was there governor. Already for three weeks had he enjoyed the sweetness of that happy climate, when going one day a hunting, he heard the most piercing cries, which issued from a wood, situate on the borders of the sea. As he was accompanied by one

P

or

of his friends, and some domesticks, he set spurs to his horse, and rode full speed that way ; where he perceived four Turks dragging three women towards the sea side. He presently apprehended them to be corsairs, who had made a descent on the coast. He attacked them smartly, and killed two of them on the spot : the other two in a fright quitted their prey, and saved themselves by swimming behind a rock, where they had hid their brigantine.

One of the women being fallen into a fit, CORNARO dismounted to assist her. Scarce had he beheld her charms but he was dazzled with them, and to see and to love her were with him the same thing. ZARA, recovered from her swoon, and surprised at this happy deliverance, testified her grateful acknowledgment in such lively expressions, that he might easily perceive her wit to be equal to her beauty. He offered to accompany her home. She lived in a handsome country house, situate on the declivity of a hill, about a mile from the shore.

The fair Greek having related to her father the danger she had been in, and the generous assistance CORNARO had lent her, the venerable old man, who knew him, returned him thanks proportioned to the service he had rendered his daughter ; and as he was excessively rich, he offered to make him a present worthy his quality. But CORNARO refused to accept it : The only thing I ask of you, said he, is to rank me in the number of your friends, and permit me now and then to come and enjoy your
your

your charming solitude. This was granted him, with tokens of the most sensible acknowledgment. After some hours of conversation, CORNARO went home, his mind full of the idea of the lovely ZARA.

The fair Greek, on her side, had not been insensible of the young nobleman's merit. This first interview, in reality, united their hearts by an indissoluble bond. Five or six days after this adventure, the noble Venetian, under pretence of hunting, went to pay a visit to his Grecian friend: but perceiving ZARA walking alone in a grove of orange trees, contiguous the house, he flew to meet her; and as the opportunity seemed to be favourable, declared without hesitation the passion he had conceived for her. ZARA, far from dissembling, or seeming angry at what he said, frankly confessed that she felt the same inclination for him: But, adds she, what will be the result of this reciprocal passion? You belong to one of the most considerable families of the republic; your parents will never consent to a marriage so disproportionate. Inform my father of your design, and perhaps you may together find some expedient to remove those difficulties I foresee. I cannot, however, flatter myself with the hopes of our ever being happy, and this thought gives me the utmost uneasiness. seduced by your merit, and your high birth, I could not guard my heart from the shafts of love; and as I am incapable of dissimulation, I have thought that such a confession would do me no harm, in your opinion. Great and generous

souls do not place the wisdom of our sex in those mean subterfuges, by which no lover, that has the least knowledge of the world, can ever be duped. Besides, the custom of our country, and the maxims we always proceed on, give a sanction to the step I have now taken. I know you are too honest a man to make an ill use of my sincerity : I love you 'tis true, and perceive plainly that without you I can never be happy ; but I know at the same time what is due to my reputation, which I will never fully by any unguarded measure.—CORNARO, ravished with these sentiments of the lovely ZARA, swore to her an eternal friendship, and promised, with the most solemn oaths, that he would never abuse the confidence she had reposed in him.

This conversation would have continued longer, if the father informed, that signior CORNARO was with his daughter, had not come and interrupted them. Overjoy'd at the sight of his child's deliverer, he loaded him with civilities. CORNARO laid hold of this favourable moment, to propose to him the marriage. My happiness, says the venerable old man, would be compleat, if I could flatter myself with the hopes of having a son-in-law of your rank and merit. But what you aim at, Sir, would be attended with great difficulties. I am rich 'tis true ; my family is antient, and without blemish : but at the same time you know that the Venetian nobility have the utmost con-
tempt

tempt for our nation, which they hold, as one may call it, in a sort of slavery. All that I can do for you, is to give my daughter a considerable fortune. Endeavour therefore to prevail on your parents to consent to this marriage; and be assured that on the celebration of it, you shall receive a hundred thousand sequins from me. Above all, try every effort to bring over your uncle to your interests. He knows me perfectly well, and I am persuaded that if he enters into this project, you will certainly succeed.

JULIAN CORNARO, being returned to the governor, informed him of his adventure with the beautiful ZARA, and his design to marry her. His uncle, after having maturely reflected upon the advantages that would result to his nephew from this alliance, advised him to proceed to Venice, in order to induce his parents to give their consent to it. He gave him all the instructions he thought requisite, and wrote letters to his father on the occasion. CORNARO, having informed his mistress and his future father-in-law of the governor's good dispositions, set out for Venice. His parents, after many consultations, consented to the marriage, upon condition that it should be celebrated privately, and that the fair ZARA should continue some years in Dalmatia, without using the name of CORNARO till the nuptials had been published and approved by the republick. Our lover communicated to his mistress, by letter, the restrictions he was laid under by his parents,

and found her willing to acquiesce in them all, as she was persuaded the family had too much honour to deceive her. No sooner had JULIAN received her consent, but he departed from Venice to complete his felicity: but how great was his distraction, upon his arrival in Dalmatia, when he was informed that an Algerine rover had carried her away a week before.

Coming to her father's house, to hear the detail of this melancholy affair, he found the good old man inconsolable for the loss of his daughter, and ready to give up the ghost. Touched with the most sensible grief, CORNARO did all in his power to give him comfort, and assured him that he would either lose his life, or bring back the fair ZARA. And as the moments were precious, he with all expedition fitted out a felucca well armed, and sailed in pursuit of the pyrate; but could get no news of him till he came to Algiers, where they both arrived the same day. Here the master having informed him that ZARA was sold to an aga, for the Grand Seignior's seraglio, he immediately set sail for Constantinople. The pyrate, observing the matchless beauty of his fair captive, was afraid to carry her to Algiers, for fear the dey should deprive him of his lovely prize. He put in at Modon therefore, and offered her to the governor of that city. This aga was one of his friends, and accepted her with the more pleasure, as he stood in need of a protectress in the seraglio. Nor did he only receive

ceive her with great joy, but from the first day treated her more like a queen than a slave.

The fair Greek, emboldened by these extraordinary tokens of respect, resolved to open herself freely to a man who had the appearance of so much generosity. She was unacquainted with his design ; and having one day demanded a private audience, she spoke to him in the following terms : ZELIM, your kind behaviour to me gives me hope that you will not be insensible to my misfortunes. I am able to pay you a large rancome : do but restore me to my father, and be assured that his generosity will surpass your expectation. My captivity will be the occasion of his death ; and you have it in your power to do an act of charity, that will render your name illustrious throughout all Christendom.

Madam, replied the aga, I make no doubt of the truth of your promises ; but it is entirely out of my power to do as I could wish : I have writ to the Porte, and you are designed for the seraglio of his sublime highness. Ah ZELIM ! cried the unfortunate ZARA, what have I done to you, that you should condemn me to such a severe slavery ? No, cruel man, if that be your intention, my death shall deliver me from so great an evil. Since there is no more hope for me, the sword or poison shall soon terminate my miserable life.— With that, in an instant, she snatched the aga's poinard, and plunged it into her breast.

ZELIM, surprized at this action, was in the utmost confusion : the suspension of his senses
made

made him incapable of flying to her relief ; and in vain he opened his mouth to call for assistance. At last reflecting, that after this the might possible recover, he ran to the apartment of his women ; who perceiving his disorder, came with him to the fair captive's relief. They bound up her wound to stop the effusion of blood, and sent for an able surgeon to examine it, who soon perceived it was not mortal. The weapon had glanced beside all the noble parts, and only passed through the flesh. But as it was foreseen that this unhappy creature might take off the dressing, they tied down her hands by way of prevention.

As soon as they saw she was out of danger, the aga put her on board for Constantinople. CORNARO had already been there a fortnight ; and as, notwithstanding all his enquiries, he heard no news of his mistress, he began to think the corsair had deceived him, and was accordingly prepared to leave the city, when I informed him of her arrival. This tender lover was so ravished with the hope that I gave him of releasing her out of the seraglio, that he offered to make me a present of all he had in the world ; but I would accept only a ring of pretty considerable value ; and to satisfy him of my sincerity, I assured him, that when he received that ring again, he might get ready a felucca in a certain place that I mentioned, and I would deliver him his fair Greek. You have heard in what manner it was done.

Here.

Here ASTAROTH finished his relation. I took my leave of him, after having desired the continuation of his friendship ; and he assured me that when I had any occasion of his assistance, I might find him as usual in his cavern.

THE

THE
DEVIL HERMIT:
OR, THE
ADVENTURES
OF
ASTAROTH
BANISHED from HELL.

The THIRD BOOK.

CHAP. I.

*The Chevalier treats ASTAROTH ill, and
for what Reason.*

I had been now six months under the yoke of HYMEN, when I began to perceive that my spouse had no longer the same tenderness for me as at first. An affected devotion, more than commonly strong, made me suspect some intrigue. I watched her narrowly for some time :

time : but all my attention, all my enquiries, ended only in this ; to let me see that the intrigues of a spiritual coquet are impenetrable to the most jealous and quick-sighted husband. I loved her, and my love is now degenerated into jealousy. That fatal passion deprived me of all repose. The uncertainty of my suspicions, added still to my torments. I could not withstand a violent curiosity of knowing the whole secret of her conduct ; and resolved at last to get this mystery cleared up by my faithful *ASTAROTH*.

Being arrived in the usual place of our rendezvous, I was vastly surprized at my entrance to see his hermit's habit torn in pieces, and scattered all over the cave. The first idea that this spectacle gave me, was, that my subaltern *DEVIL* had been again discovered by some of the infernal lords, who had consequently carried him away prisoner. I was confirmed in this opinion, when after I had evoked him several times, he did not appear. Truly sensible, as I was, of the loss of so valuable a friend, I had already bewailed him with tears, and was going to quit the cave, when I was hindered by the coming in of a very venerable personage. Form to your self the idea of one of your courtly abbé's, who is naturally a pretty fellow, and now well set off, after some hours spent at his toilette : add to the figure of

this

this, ADONIS a red * calot and a † camail of crimson velvet ; in all this you have some resemblance of the reverend person, whose unexpected approach made me fall back three paces.

Yet who should it be at last, but ASTAROTH himself ? My surprize threw him into such a fit of laughter, that I soon knew him for my old acquaintance. May it please your eminence, I cried out, to inform me what is become of your monkish humility ? -- What is the man thinking of ? he answers. Do you imagine humility to be a virtue known among monks ? Is it not sufficient that they take the pains sometimes to preach it, without fatiguing themselves about the practice ? They harangue you from the pulpit : it is their interest, and consequently their duty so to do. It is yours to humble yourselves at their feet, to open your purses, to confide in them as in people who have all power in heaven and on earth, and even in our empire.— Very good, said I, this doctrine is still more admirable than it is new. Your eminence seems perfectly well to understand your business. But may one dare to ask you by what means you have risen to the dignity of a cardinal ?—By the most merry means said he, in the world. Upon the faith of a devil, the subject is worthy of your curiosity ; and I will give you the contents of it in a few

* A Cardinal's Cap.

† A Bishop's Robe.

word.

words. Have you never heard talk of prince FORTUNATUS, who, without any merit, has found the secret of winning his master's heart, so that the pontiff now does nothing but by his direction? This wretch of a minister, though already well stricken in years, took it in his head to fall in love with a courtezan, whose beauty made a great noise. Her name was DONNA STRETTA. She had all those graces from nature, which are the usual ornaments of her sex; and the character of her mind was not less admirable than the charms of her person. Never did courtezan show herself so disinterested as DONNA STRETTA: her heart must be inclined to the man before he received any of her favours; and neither gold nor diamonds could make the least impression on her, unless she liked the person who presented them. Prince FORTUNATUS, whose immense riches were his only merit, could have here little hope, and he must have died with grief but for my assistance. The poor prince, who grew the more enamoured, the more he was repulsed, was at his wits end, when I arrived at Rome in the habit of a simple ecclesiastic. My figure and the sprightliness of my wit, contributed equally to make me taken notice of by DONNA STRETTA. We soon became well acquainted, and I gave her so much satisfaction, that she voluntarily quitted all her amours, to admit only me. The pretty creature diverted me now and then with saying what was true, though she neither knew

Q

nor

nor believed it to be so when she spoke. Certainly, she would often cry, you are no man ! Never had mortal so much strength and vigour ! You are either a devil or an angel ! — This alternative would make me burst out in a laugh.

I am apt to think I should have lived for ever with this amiable fair, if my duty had not prevailed over my inclination : but there was a work to be done, which would be meritorious at the infernal court. What his holiness was with regard to his favourite FORTUNATUS, DONNA STRETTA was to me. I pretended an ambition to become a cardinal, and made use of this pretence to her, to induce her to make the old minister happy. The stratagem had its effect : I obtained the hat, and was loaded with honours and riches ; after which prince FORTUNATUS arrived at the summit of his desire. Just in this manner, my dear chevalier, go all the affairs of human life. Intrigue and vice are the springs by which we move mankind, and by the practice of which we enable them to arrive at honours, that all lead directly to, and terminate at last in a place in our empire.

I agree with you, said I, that the Mercurial scheme has produced many men of note, who had ever continued in deep oblivion, without this efficacious means of advancing themselves. But my Lord, if I am allowed the liberty to speak freely to your eminence, as I did to the good hermit, I cannot help owning to you the repugnance I should have to the use of any such means,

means, in order to obtain the favours of fortune.—Think better of the matter, Chevalier, reply'd ASTAROTH ; this is a track that has been beaten by more than one of my brethren ; it is a well known way to dignity. Look over all the most shining classes of mankind ; gentlemen of the sword, and gentlemen of the law ; even men of letters, whose names are enrolled in the list of your academies, where none should be admitted but persons of distinguished merit ; you will find in them all some who have acquired the honours they enjoy, by the very same means I have mentioned. As for your part, chevalier, how long have you been grown so delicate ? Why did you not make this remonstancé before I introduced you to DONNA THERESA ?

Alas ! I said, that I had done so in fact. You dered me happy, it is true, in being propitious to my desires : but that happiness is passed away like a dream. I am now the most unfortunate of all mortals. What ails you now, chevalier ? said ASTAROTH with an air of irony. Are you no longer pleased with DONNA THERESA ? Well, if that be the case, you must e'en leave her, and marry another. I have a long while, you know, reserved for you a rich heiress. The poor girl languishes away life, and I dare not promise to give her to you such as you would wish to have her, if you make her stay ever so little longer. May she and all her sex, said I in the anguish of my heart, be for ever cursed ! Women are all fickle, and incapable

of constancy. For my own part, I have resolved to quit mine, and never to think of another while I live. Ah, my lord! would your eminence have thought that a person who has virtue painted in her countenance; that a person, I say, who has sweetness enough to charm the most insensible man; in a word, that DONNA THERESA could be capable of infidelity? —Softly, softly, Sir, replied ASTAROTH with his usual tone of raillery, ought you not to have expected this misfortune? Can a Frenchman be so affected with such trifles as these?

How is that, ASTAROTH? Do you call by the name of trifles the infidelities of a wife to her husband? What a diabolical manner of thinking! Men are very much of another opinion; at least, for my own share, I must confess that the apprehension of this misfortune torments me to the soul. My wife is for ever beset by a certain ecclesiastic, who comes to visit her with impunity, and I dare not say him nay. The perfidious woman seems to have somewhat more for him than mere respect. For any thing that I know, my dear ASTAROTH, I am already become a member of that famous society, which makes more noise in the world than the free masons.

For any thing that you know? said he; why sir, do you doubt it? What right, I beseech you, have you to be exempt from it? Have you not married a pretty woman, very rich, and possessed of charms to engage every eye,
and

and captivate every heart. And did you think then, that so many perfections were for you alone? Be informed, Sir, that a young lady of **DONNA THERESA**'s temper and constitution is destined to give love and to receive it. As I have withheld nothing hitherto from you, I dare trust you with the secret, that it was I myself who inspired her with a passion for the grand inquisitor. Your absence makes their moments now happy, and their mutual felicity at this instant engages them both to wish you may never return.

At the end of this jovial narrative, I, more terrified than a man who should actually feel horns sprouting out of his head, fell into a fit of rage that had been fatal to his diabolical eminence, if the foul of this evil spirit had not been secure against all my thrusts. In vain I endeavoured, time after time, to run my sword through his body, and was regretting my imprudence in breaking the bottle of holy water, when it came to my mind that I had about me a scapulary, which I accepted out of complaisance from a nun that I used now and then to visit. The apprehension that my **DEVIL** would make his escape, induced me at first to dissemble: but the idea of my faithless fair returning, I clapp'd the piece of sanctified cloth upon his face at once. It did wonders there: **ASTAROTH** fell flat on the ground, and uttered most horrible cries. For my part, insensible of his pain, I made use of my advantage to encrease his torments, and wrapped it

so fast about him, that he had no power to help himself. Mercy ! good chevalier, he cried aloud.—No quarter, answered I ; I am inexorable on that head. What ! have the impudence to seduce my wife ! Thou wretch, the most horrible torments are not sufficient to explicate thy crime. Is it thus that thou preservest that fidelity which thou hadst promised me ?—Cruel man as thou art ! replied ASTAROTH, howling in the most frightful manner : suffer thyself to be prevailed on, and at least do me the favour to hear me, before thou inflictest on my body a punishment so inhuman.

His prayers, far from moving me, did but contribute to animate my fury the more. A jealous person is never capable of listening to reason, or suffering his heart to relent. The torments of ASTAROTH seemed to alleviate my own pains ; and I continued them without relaxation, till at last, quite fatigued, I gave way to a short slumber ; which the thought of my misfortunes, however, soon banished from my eyes. By good luck the scapulary held my DEVIL all this while, as if he had been nailed to the bottom of the cave. I was transported to see him again, and renewed his chastisement afresh, till the want of strength obliged me to suspend my anger. I was now obliged to hear him. He endeavoured at first to make conditions with me, and insisted upon being set at liberty, by my taking off the scapulary while he told his story ; but I knew my gentleman

too well to trust him, and I would only consent to loosen it a little, and hold it all the while by the strings, that I might make it slacker or tighter as I saw occasion.

What a pleasant sight must it then have been, to have seen a poor weak mortal lead in his hand one of the most malignant and cunning devils in all hell, and that by a feeble piece of ferret of about half an inch broad; at the end of which was a small bit of cloth cut square, and worked with a cross! Shew me the heretic that would not have retracted at the sight of such a phenomenon as this! But that excommunication, which is so justly thundered against them, has shut their eyes both bodily and spiritual. A great divine told me, that they would never comprehend even such a miracle as this, and that it was necessary to give them up to their obstinate incredulity. This good man declared very seriously, that he had no opinion of those people who made use of their reason. It had been heresy not to believe him upon his ipse dixit: I had more wit therefore than to dispute the matter with him, though I then knew the following history, which deserves to be the subject of a new chapter.

C H A P.

C H A P. II.

The virtues of the Scapulary : Or, the History of Father CASIMIRE, a bare-footed Carmelite. The Deliverance of ASTAROTH, who disenchants the Chevalier, and lets him see his Mistress in all her deformity.

THERE is a certain city on the Maese, formerly pretty famous on account of its situation, and for a very strong castle that defended it. Wonders were here wrought by a bare-footed carmelite, by virtue of a scapulary, upon which was embroidered a sort of medal, that he had brought from Rome, and which he assured the people had been blessed by the successor of the greatest of all the apostles. Father CASIMIRE, that was the name of our pious miracle-monger, was a fellow that scarce had his equal ; large of stature, strong, crafty ; and whose wanton eyes, added to his martial air, plainly indicated that he was not always employed in repeating his rosary. This hypocrite in grain had found the gordian knot of a most refined course of leachery. Not a tender young virgin, not a pretty wife, who did not fall into his snares. There was an emulation of piety among all the fair sex, which exceeded any thing that ever was known ; and every woman

was

was eager to have Father CASIMIRE for her director. This wolf in sheep's clothing had insinuated to the stupid populace, in the city and circumjacent places, that the medal which had been blessed by the sovereign pontiff, and which was fastened to the scapulary, had a wonderful specifick power in affairs of propagation; that it gave fertility to wives, and to maids such charms, as made them capable to captivate the hearts of those young fellows they wished to marry. Never was bookseller more credulous in his favourite author, than the fair sex were in him: never did mountebank find a nostrum that produced so many effects as our medal, which was emphatically surnamed the eighth wonder of the world.

Imagine then, that the fair, enchanted by the numberless virtues of this medal, came in droves to good father CASIMIRE. There, these amiable creatures fell down devoutly on their knees to kiss the precious relick, which hung two or three inches below his girdle. This act of adoration, assisted by a certain essence that the father had taken care to get imbibed in the scapulary, so tended to heat their imaginations, that they all went home highly satisfied. In a little time a spirit of enthusiasm took possession of all their minds, and nothing was talked of among the sex, but the wonderful things which the monk every day performed by virtue of his medal. Here a credulous husband was posting to the monastery with his present, and to render thanks to the venerable
monk

monk for having procured him an heir, of which he thought himself the father: there a tender mother, sensible of the advantages her child had received, incessantly sang the praises of this divine treasure, to whom she fancied herself indebted for some booby son-in-law, who had married her daughter, notwithstanding her ugliness and ill conduct. But as there are no roses without thorns, one may in like manner say, that there is no felicity exempt from troubles. The good father CASIMIRE was not long before he felt the effects of this woful truth. The devil, who never sleeps, inspired him with a certain temerity that made him despise all precaution. The chronicle of scandal was not more favourable, than the father was careful; and report, in a little time, began to open the eyes of the least bigotted. It was rumoured, that the good father owed the effects of his medal purely to nocturnal visits; and some said boldly, that the city was indebted to him for a good number of its inhabitants. Things were in this state, when he compleated his own ruin in the opinion of mankind, by the following act of indiscretion, among others, that obliged him to abscond.

A girl of between twelve and thirteen made his mouth water. This young pullet, more crafty still than pretty, was an overmatch for his reverence. She had a heart too tender to confine herself to one man, and no longer withstood the father's solicitations, than she was assured from him, that his scapulary would protect

test her from those accidents, which are the usual consequences of the inexpressible pleasures of love. The lovely girl was already mistress of the heart of a canon, who had hitherto thought it his duty to spare her fine shape; but father CASIMIRE had not been used to such cautious proceedings. Trusting to his industry and his reputation, the friar kept no medium; and his pretty young pupil soon found herself afflicted with a nine months dropsy, which it was impossible to hide.

A canon is seldom the dupe of any one, especially in the affairs of love. In vain his mistress endeavoured to persuade him, that he was the author of her misfortune: he was too certain of what he had done, and knew it could never be. The cunning priest seemed however to be satisfied, that she might have no suspicion of his design; but, fully convinced, that some other had plucked the fruit of this young plant, he set spies about her, who discovered his rival.

It requires an ASTAROTH, or some other of his species, to represent the fury of this ecclesiastical minion, when he was fully satisfied of what had befallen him. Enraged to think he was over-reached by a mushroom fellow of a mendicant, he never suspended the effects of his choler, but in order to render them the more terrible. He resolved, by way of vengeance, to make his rival undergo the fate of ABELAR: but the friar, more vigorous and robust than the canon's emissaries, defended himself

himself so courageously, that they had reason to repent them of their undertaking. As this affair however did not pass without a great bustle, it made so much noise in the city, that the good father, for fear worse should follow, was obliged to withdraw. The less happy canon, besides the mortification of having failed in his enterprize, saw himself exposed to the laughter of all the people of fashion. In a little time after, his mistress, whom he still loved, notwithstanding her infidelity, underwent that painful crisis, which made her the mother of a lovely creature, whom all the ill-natured called a mixed animal. Persons of best sense gave all the honour of it to the canon, who was much better able to provide for the poor infant than the Carmelite : for that father, since his relick had lost its credit, was become very poor.

Perhaps the scapulary that I was possessed of, had not all the virtues that were for a long time attributed to that of the celebrated father CASSIMIRE : it was sufficient for me that it had the power of charming any devil, that should have the malignant impudence to play tricks with a man that is subject to the holy inquisition. I made the most of this power a long while, till at last, relying on the promise that ASTROTOM made me, of making reparation for all the injury he had done me, I delivered him from his shackles. No sooner was he free, but he addressed himself to me in words to this effect: chevalier, if I did not begin to habituate myself to the injustices of people of your species, I could have

never pardon the punishment you have so cruelly inflicted on me. However, since it was my frankness that brought it on my head, I will live with you for the future like a fashionable friend, that is, with a great deal of policy, and very little sincerity.

How is that, my lord Cardinal? cried I. Is it in this manner thou beginnest to make me the promised reparation? Are the injuries thou complainest of to be compared to the torments which thy malice has made me suffer? What have I done to thee, barbarian, that deserved those infidelities of which thou hast made Donna THERESA guilty? Why didst thou at first lend me thy assistance, if thy design was afterwards, under pretence of doing me service, to make me the most unhappy of mortals? Ah, cruel ASTAROTH! it is for me to complain; and if thou reflectest ever so little on the condition thou hast reduced me to, thou must agree that my vengeance is not equal to the greatness of the insult. If that be the case, replied his diabolical eminence, and since I perceive that you really think as you speak, I pardon you all the ill you have done me, upon condition that for the future you never proceed to such extremities with me, without first having well considered the matter: for I must tell you, Chevalier, that if you are not guilty of cruelty, you are guilty at least of want of reflexion. Ought you to have expected that I should undertake to render favourable a beauty truly chaste? If I had undertaken such a thing, and succeeded, know that it would not have

R

been

been in my power to keep her faithful. We devils can do ill fast enough, and suggest it into the hearts of mortals ; but as it is not in our power to do in reality any one good action, so neither can we prevent those disorders that we occasion from increasing of themselves. Besides, did not I tell you that you would soon grow weary of DONNA THERESA ? Was it my duty then to foretell a misfortune, which, chimerical as it may be, would have corroded the pleasure of your most happy days ? Ah, Chevalier, if I did not dread that choleric vivacity of yours, I could inform you of some things that would soon give you consolation for the loss of your mistress.—What is it you mean ? said I with precipitation.—I mean, answered he, that being desirous to put you in possession of DONNA THERESA's wealth, I fascinated your eyes in such a manner, that she appeared to you young, and the most charming creature in the world, though she is in reality old, and the most ugly of all beings that live on this side our empire. The grand inquisitor is not less duped than you have been, and will be happy no longer than the charm endures.

The discourse of his diabolical eminence seemed to me at first an incomprehensible mystery : but no sooner had he conducted me to my wife's apartment, and taken off the charm that made her seem lovely, but I perceived a creature more ugly than the picture that ASTAROTH had given me of her. My surprise made the fly devil laugh, who now opportunely whispered me to take possession of a small casket,

ket, that contained the most valuable of DONNA THERESA's jewels. As I had long been accustomed to put my hand often into a certain strong coffer, the contents of which visibly diminished, a natural instinct carried me thither for the last time, when I left nothing behind me that I thought myself able to carry off clean. Then returning with ASTAROTH to the cave, I made him all the reparation he could desire, for my passionate usage of his eminence.

CH A P. III.

The Author makes his Peace with ASTAROTH, who informs him of some remarkable Facts, and gives him a great deal of Advice. The Author follows that of returning to his native Country.

BETTER pleased at seeing myself master of DONNA THERESA's jewels, than a miser who receives a large interest upon a small capital, I easily forgot that horrid creature, and thought of nothing but in what way to make use of my riches. ASTAROTH at first put on a face of anger, and seemed unwilling to vouchsafe me any advice. I had a great deal of pains to reconcile him to me, and all my excuses were insufficient to give him satisfaction. Never sure was there an infernal spirit, that stood more upon the punctilio of honour. It was not the torment I had made him suffer, that drew on me his indifference: I had accused him of perfidy; and he

could not, he said, pardon me so outrageous an affront.

To confess the truth, I laughed in my sleeve to see a devil so jealous of his reputation; but giving way to his capricious humour, I declared myself guilty, aggravated my crimes, and begged pardon for it in such a moving manner, that he was at last overcome by entreaty, renewed his promise of assistance, and vowed on the faith of a devil to keep it. This peace was not ratified without a formal treaty, which both parties swore to: I, that I would never suspect his fidelity and probity; and he, that he would be submissive and faithful to me, till the very moment he was called home to hell. This convention having brought him again into good humour, he offered me one of the finest women in all Italy, in recompence for my loss of *DONNA THERESA*; but seeing plainly by my answer, that I was not disposed to enter again so soon into the bonds of that faithless and deceitful sex, but on the contrary, rather inclined to augment my fortune, he advised me to enter into the venerable company of tax-gatherers. You cannot imagine, says he, Chevalier, all the advantages of that profession. I know them well, answered I: I am of a country where they are as much respected as hated: but, for my part, I love neither the flattery of great men, nor the hatred of the populace. Besides, I am a gentleman by birth, and would not degrade myself so far as to associate with a body of men, the very heads of whom were born in servitude, or among the dregs

dregs of the common people. What a whimsical turn of mind you mortals have! replied his diabolical eminence with a loud laugh. The greatest part of you men of rank pique yourselves on a chimerical nobility, which ruins you, and leads you in the direct road to beggary; whereas a man from among the meanest of the people endeavours to push himself by all sorts of methods, and seldom fails of succeeding. How many footmen has fortune in your time ennobled, whose children are now arrived to the summit of dignity? Witness the marquis de GRACE, colonel of a regiment, who has a sister married to a count of an antient lineage. Their father was drawer to a tavern, and raised himself by intrigue to the degree of grandeur he now enjoys, and which has enabled him to make the fortune of his children. I know, said I, the countess and the marquis you speak of perfectly well: I know that their father is farmer-general, and that he was of no higher descent than the greatest part of his brethren: but I am ignorant what means he made use of, to procure himself such a splendid estate as he now seems to be possessed of. I can give you satisfaction to that, replied ASTAROTH, in very few words. P*** is the son of a miserable poor peasant in the province of Burgundy. At the age of fourteen, he quitted his paternal cottage, and went to Paris, where he got reception in a tavern, the master of which he had seen in his own country. The lad was then a good sprightly youth, and we had very great hopes

of him in our empire. He had not been long in-service, before he gave proofs of his mercu-rial ability. His first prank was forgiven him : but as they watched his conduct more narrowly after this, his master soon perceived that he was not fit for his purpose, and turned him a-stray to seek his fortune.

P*** had luckily got acquainted, and was linked in friendship with some footmen, who came to drink at his master's house. One of these party-colour'd gentry recommended him to the wife of an under farmer of the revenue. He had the good fortune to please her, and she took him into her service, without enquiring after his character. The good lady began to lose the bloom of her youth ; and P***, who was nick-named JASMIN, was just in the flower of all his days. He was exceeding nice in his dress, and knew so well how to seize OCCASION by the forelock, that he went snacks with his master, who about the same time was made farmer general. By his mistress's order, and at her expence, JASMIN was taught to read and write ; and soon after he had a place given him, the income of which, though very tolerable, was not sufficient to satisfy his vanity. He was now in possession of the true key of his own fortune, and made use of it to all possible advantage. In less than twelve years, he rose from degree to degree, up to the very post he is now in, and in which he has amassed wealth enough to maintain his family in that rank, where it now shines so brilliantly.

I was unacquainted with this history, said I to my quondam HERMIT : but, upon my own knowledge, I see in the revenue so many other shining characters of the same species, that I can never resolve to incorporate myself among such people. — Well, leave them to themselves then, replied ASTAROTH, since you so dislike them. They are indeed protected by the principal lords of the infernal empire, for which their body is an inexhaustible source of excellent subjects: there has never yet been one member of it that failed in the fealty he had sworn to us. But, continued my counsellor, since this way of life, the best indeed that can be chosen, is disagreeable to you, and you are afraid of derogating by it from your nobility ; why, sir, do you not take to the army ? You have riches enough to make a figure there for some years ; and let the worst come to the worst, after you have spent all your money, you may get in with some rich widow, whom I will prevail upon to re-establish your fortune. The army, said I, would please me very well, if a man was not liable there to the disgrace of having others put over his head: but how often, after having spent all he is worth in the sovereign's service, has an officer the mortification to see a young beardless boy, who has no other merit but that of high birth or powerful protection, get the start of him ? — Well but, replied ASTAROTH, examine me then from head to foot ; would the scarlet I am adorned with please you better ? This profession, in my opinion,
has

has charms that may seduce the most modest. As merit, at this day, has no longer a place among us ecclesiasticks, there is nothing more easy than to rise in the church. What character among men can be more brilliant than ours? We are most of us rich; all of us respected; and we all enjoy privileges that raise us even above princes. Our head is the first of mankind, and there is no one, not the least individual of our species, who has not a share of the boundless power of that sovereign of sovereigns. Ah, Chevalier, if you feel any inclination for this happy profession, to what degree of grandeur may you not arise, having me for your friend and protector? For I must let you know, that nothing is done in this illustrious body but by our direction. It is our sovereign that gives a sanction to all decrees, that always presides over their venerable assemblies, from which we take the utmost care to banish, and even to anathematise, every living man whose virtue is suspected. Now, Chevalier, what dost thou think of this?

I admire, said I, to ASTAROTH, this pompous sample of a description, which however is literally true. This makes me not wonder at one of our antient doctors, for saying that your country is paved with ecclesiasticks. For my part, however, I would not be one of them, tho' I were sure of obtaining the triple crown. Besides, as I feel in myself no inclination to become a cabalist, I should make a very foolish figure among you, and
run

run a great risque of never being advanced. You only think so, answered ASTAROTH : but that modesty of yours is owing merely to your want of knowing the world. Take this along with you, Chevalier, that as appetite comes by eating, the desire of rising encreases in proportion as a person rises. Do you know the lord cardinal AMIRONI ? Nothing could be more modest than that famous prelate, when first he embraced the life of an ecclesiastic. The most his birth could admit him to aspire after, was a simple canonicate. Now he keeps a chapel equal to mine, and forms a design no less than that of raising himself to the sovereign hierarchy. If this great man should obtain that eminent post, I expect he would do more service to our empire, than a whole million of vulgar devils put together. One may justly say, that he is entirely devoted to LUCIFER, and that none of us all out-does him either in malice or wiles.

This prelate, though born of the meanest parents, has preserved nothing of the baseness of his extraction. His bold and insinuating genius, has enabled him to ascend to the highest degree of fortune. He once governed despotically, or, to say better, tyrannically, one of the principal monarchies in Europe. He was obliged, it is true, to leave that kingdom ; yet did not leave off to conduct the affairs of it. Nothing is now done there but in pursuance of the maxims he laid down, and all his refined policy is exactly put in practice. It was he that inspired

spired the war that is lately broke out. His brain teems nothing continually but great and unjust projects, whose sole tendency is to drive an illustrious family from a certain throne, which he thinks it possesses unlawfully. Long ago, through his intrigues, thousands of emissaries were sent into the dominions of the reigning prince, whom he called a usurper, in order to lay the train of a fatal rebellion, which must inevitably have broke out, but for the most prudent precautions. AMIRONI is the evil genius of the expelled and banished pretended king, whose enemy at the same-time he would seem to appear. It is he that stirs him up, that animates his cause, that solicits all the powers of the same communion to enable him to recover a crown, which however he could not preserve even if he was peaceably possessed of it, because he wants all the talents necessary to acquire the affection of a people so stubborn, and so jealous of their liberties. One of the most flourishing monarchies of our hemisphere enters into this vast project, the execution of which has been deemed so easy, that his eminence, who puts all in motion, has dared to propose an alliance in the name of the wou'd-be-king.

In a word, he is the disturber of all Europe, and the inventor of all the conspiracies that have been hatched for more than twenty years past. You may believe that all the schemes he put in motion, that his continual hurry, which drives sleep for ever from his eyes, are suggested

gested by interest and ambition. He predicted that he should rise to the sovereign pontificate, and is resolved to omit no stratagems, that his intriguing genius can furnish him with, to verify his prediction, though, for the execution of his project, he should sacrifice three parts of humankind. Persuaded that he shall become necessary in the midst of discord, he endeavours to blow the sparks of it at every court. A destructive rupture has already broke out between two very considerable powers. He labours, with all his might, to spread the same flames in the greatest part of Christendom. If he succeeds, it will be then his time to fish in troubled waters, and at last to seize the triple crown, the morsel so much desired by all the members of the sacred college.

ASTAROTH, who had resumed his good humour, diverted himself a long time in relating all the juggling tricks of this most eminent prelate. Better than a secretary that has the largest share of his master's confidence, he was fully acquainted with all the correspondences and numberless intrigues of our famous politician: but as he talked too freely of the cabinet secrets of sovereigns, and a little shocked my natural discretion, I broke in upon his narrative, in order to communicate to him a project that was just then come into my mind. I perceive, said I, by reflecting on all the professions that you have proposed to me, that there is not one of them will suit me. Without farther deliberation therefore, I am resolved to give way
L to

to my natural inclination, that is, to continue the life of a knight-errant, which I pursued before my marriage with *DONNA THERESA*. But, *LORD ASTAROTH*, to render my travels agreeable, I shall have need of your company. I should like to wander over both the hemispheres of our planet ; and that I may never lose the idea of the places I have made any stay in, I would every where make collections of the most curious anecdotes, for the diversion of my friends on my days of repose. *ASTAROTH*, my dear *ASTAROTH*, I know all the extent of your talents : your humour is gay ; your tattle amusing ; in a word, you possess all the qualities requisite to satisfy my ruling passion, and procure me new delights as the days revolve. If you will follow me, depend upon it I shall not be ungrateful, and that you shall have a powerful protector against all the subjects of your empire, who may be jealous of your reputation.

What say'st thou Chevalier ? cried his diabolical eminence. One may easily see that you were bred up in a court : you are such a very courtier when you want to obtain any favour. If I was not devoted to you as I am, I could not withstand the charms of your politeness. Rely on what I say, Sir : I will accompany you wheresoever you shall please to go.

C H A P. IV.

The Author is transported into the Capital of the Universe. Changes that had happened during the time he was absent. He meets with an Adventurer, whom he knew formerly, and who tricks him of good part of his Jewels.

THE natural taste that I had for travel made me highly delighted with the good graces of my faithful ASTAROTH. I gave him a thousand thanks; and, as I was very fond of adventures, proposed to him immediately the taking a trip to Paris, where I had some little acquaintance. Very good, Chevalier, said he; I consent to it: but as I am subject to the orders of my superiors, I ought to inform you that I shall now and then be obliged to be absent. All I can promise you is, that I will execute as speedily as possible whatever instructions I may receive, and return to you as soon as I have done, in order to inform you of any thing you shall wish to know, and to give you my advice in times of difficulty. Then pulling a small phial out of his pocket, Here, says he, take and drink a few drops of this elixir, which has the virtue of preserving human nature from all those wants to which it is continually subject. In fact, I had no
S
sooner

sooner swallowed five or six drops of it, but I found myself almost in the same plight with a fat canon, who has spent some hours in stuffing his paunch with the most nourishing dishes. This elixir has one property in which it excelled even the best food; which was, that it refreshed the senses, and yet preserved from all inclination to sleep. I was admiring the effect of it to ASTAROTH, when he told me, that it was composed by the abbot CHIMÆRIUS who had found means to starve himself to death with this important secret. This, he added, ought not to surprise you. To speak the truth, the abbot, by his conduct, destroys the reputation of his drops. He publishes every where, that they have the virtue of making a man live three months without eating or drinking: but, at the same time he so boasts the virtue of his tincture, if any one invites him to dinner, he eats as if it had no other virtue but to whet the appetite, and famish the person who uses it. It was necessary to the abbot's character that these drops should pass through the hands of some one of my species. By that means all who use them, will conceive the same idea of them as you now do, and may very soon make his fortune. If you want to know this famous chymist, continued ASTAROTH, you shall presently have it in your power to see him, without being perceived yourself.

My metamorphosed HERMIT had no sooner finished these words, but he trussed me up upon
his

his shoulders, almost in the same manner as *ÆNEAS* took his father *ANCHISES*. The astonishing rapidity with which he cleft the air, put me into such a terrible fright, that I lost at once all the use of my senses. At last, waking as from a sound sleep, I found myself extended upon a grassy carpet, with which nature had adorned the summit of a high mountain. *ASTAROTH*, whom I did not at first see, appeared to me all of a sudden. Where do you think yourself now, Sir? said he with a laugh. Without doubt, said I, I am just where it has pleased your eminence to bring me. But your world has been so very indifferently described to us, that I ought to be a devil myself to know what part of it I am in. Look you there, said he, pointing with his finger; on that side lies the native country of all polite people. We have been but three days on our journey, and I could have brought you hither in much less time, if I had not been detained a little at Lyons by a job, which was to inspire a very good man with the resolution to rob his brother, for the service of a priest whom I protect. I shall have another opportunity hereafter to give you a narrative of this affair, which was attended with variety of consequences, and a great many curious and interesting facts, that will afford you some diversion.

The joy I conceived at revisiting my native place, took such full possession of my mind, that I was not susceptible of any other pleasure. I did not insist upon the story; and *ASTA-*

ROTH, who knew my inward sentiments, took leave of me ; telling me, that since I was in a country well known to me, I must not take it amiss if he left me among my old acquaintance, for that he would come back to me after he had compleated the great work that was begun at Lyons. As I had in reality very strong engagements in this capital, and expected to find there many relations and friends, without running the risque of being detected concerning my former frolicks, I gave a carte blanche to my guide, and even left the time of his return to his own discretion. The moment he quitted me I took the road for Paris, and entered that city just at the close of the day.

My first care, after providing myself with a lodging, was to clothe me in a manner suitable to the figure I intended to make. I had plenty of cash upon me, and so was furnished with every thing I wanted in an instant. An utter stranger would have thought he had to do with conjurers, so many workmen were ready to execute whatever I commanded. In less than a week I was compleatly equipped, as well with linnen as with every other part of dress. My ambition however, was not satisfied, till after I had formed my household, which consisted of seven or eight servants, three of whom were dressed in the most splendid liveries. I was not then afraid of appearing among my relations, who perhaps would have received me less courteously if this magnificent equipage had not

not dazzled their eyes. My fund, great as it was at present, was far from being sufficient to support the luxury I lived in any long time ; but, as I always depended on the friendship of ASTAROTH, I made no scruple of going on, and had none of those anxieties, that the surprising diminution of my capital must otherwise have given me. A continued succession of pleasures, that were every day diversified, made the moments pass merrily away. Good eating and drinking, variety of mistresses, gaming, and the playhouse, made up the whole of my employment. Both sexes were fond of my company ; all my friends seemed to contend among themselves who should set the highest price on my favours, and I was regarded as the oracle of every assembly, that I deigned to honour with my presence. I must seriously own however, that, though open enough to flattery, I was not entirely the dupe of it. I had too much reason not to perceive that all my merit, and all the praises that were lavished on me, were owing to my generosity and luxury : yet such is the character of human nature in general, that it is fond of feeding on an imaginary good. Vanity is a kind of drunkenness, so much the more dangerous as it leads us into the most foolish extravagancies. Six months passed away in this manner, at the end of which the lowness of my stock made me reflect on the absence of ASTAROTH. For many days I endeavoured to evoke him, and all to no purpose ; but as his honesty could not

S 3

possibly

possibly be now suspected by me, after all the services I had received from him, I concluded that some devil of high rank, who had a right over him, was the occasion of this disappointment. It was lucky for me, that I had a good stock of jewels still left. I resolved to dispose of a part of these, and began in some measure to retrench my expences. This deprived me of some of my friends, the loss of whom I no otherwise regretted, than as a miser would the loss of a parasite. The pleasures I received were now less noisy, but more real and rational. I spent my time in admiring the ornaments of the city, which are very numerous, and happily encreasing every day. A man of wit, of my acquaintance, who had free access to the provost of the merchants, introduced me to that magistrate. He was a man of merit, but infatuated with his own projects, of which he talked eternally to all who came near him. One of the keys on the river side, among other things, which he had caused to be enlarged at his entrance on his office, and to which he added a parapet wall, was in his own opinion a masterly performance, and the subject of much discourse. One day, when my friend and I were in his company, he addressed himself to us thus: it is surprising that not one of the wits of the town has thought of making at least one stanza of six lines in praise of that public work. We shall see if the solar quadrant, which I am going to erect, will not rouse them from this lethargy.

As

As my friend was the man who passed for the brightest fellow in company, and did not do himself the injustice to refuse the honour of that fine quality, he took this reflection as if levelled directly at him. What do you think, (said he to me, as soon as we were by ourselves) of the philosopher TURGO? Does not that master-piece of his deserve to be immortaliz'd by an ode? I think at the least, since he is so modest as to be content with one stanza, one ought to oblige him so far. Then taking out his memorandum book, without more meditation, he wrote these verses :

When provost TURGO was in place,
And noted here too little space,
He added this same border.
All you that come, and all who go,
Render your thanks to good TURGO,
The glory of his order.

I had sucked in somewhat of ASTAROTH's character, and the character of my friend was not much less malignant than mine. I took him to sup with me, when he was easily persuaded to make me a present of this epigram. I had it immediately transcribed, and sent a servant to paste it up over the key. In a word, all Paris presently had it by heart ; every one diverted himself at the expence of the magistrate, whose vanity was well known. You may depend upon it we paid him no more visits after this our pasquinade. My friend, though known for the
author

author of the verses, lost nothing by them but a dinner now and then, which he used to get at the provost's ; a loss which I fully made up to him, as I could never wear out that natural generosity of temper, that gradually reduced me to live by my wits.

A good part of my jewels were already sold, and the money dispersed. I could not prevail on myself to discharge an equipage that I had been some time used to : a gentleman, in my opinion, had much better be dead, than without this mark of distinction. Full of this chimerical idea, I durst not look forwards on the uncertainty of my future condition, but I felt my heart pierced with the most sensible grief. My recourse was to *ASTAROTH*, whom I evoked to no purpose. The cruel *DEMON*, taken up with other adventures, laughed at my imaginary distress : and indeed I sometimes looked upon my troubles in the same light myself, in the confidence I had of his fidelity. In fine, the last remedy to my uneasiness was the frequenting of plays and public diversions, or taking a walk in company.

One evening, as I came from the opera, the unskilfulness of the coachman made him run foul of a very splendid equipage. Four swinging pages, dressed in gaudy liveries, fell to quarrelling with my servants, and threatened them hard. As I was afraid the fellows might belong to some ambassador, or foreign prince, and being loth to have any dispute with a person of such high quality, I immediately got out

out of my coach to appease the fray. The pretended prince shewed the same politeness: but scarce were his feet on the ground before I knew him for the marquis CRAMOISI, an Italian by birth, and formerly my acquaintance. Our situation with regard to each other, at least in appearance, was very different from that in which we had known each other formerly. Equally astonished at this rencounter, our first sentiments on both sides obliged us to testify some surprise; but the place not being proper for coming to an explanation together, our equipages were no sooner disentangled than the marquis made me get into his coach, in which we were driven, followed by mine, to a superb hotel that he inhabited. The furniture of it, which I took for his own, made me judge, by its magnificence, that he was one of the richest lords in Europe. Amazed at so advantageous a change in his fortune, I conjectured that he must have some genius under his command of the temper of ASMODEUS, and more punctual than the faithless ASTAROTH. He was indeed so happy as to be in the good graces of the first prince of the blood, who governed the whole kingdom, and at the same time enjoyed the favours of madame the princess of E**, whose lover he openly professed himself, and to whom he was the chief in regard among many. I had formerly heard speak of the lavish bounty of this princess on the like occasions. As time had very much preyed on her charms, and the marquis was in all the vigour of his age, I considered

considered this conquest as the sweetest morsel that could fall into the mouth of an adventurer. In effect, he confessed that within a little more than a year past, which was the time he had been acquainted with her, he had drawn from her near eight hundred thousand livres, without putting her to any other trouble than that of making him one of the bankers to the parties of gaming, that were held daily in her palace.

These games was basset, pharaoh, and lansquenet. They began usually about ten or eleven o'clock in the evening, and continued till five or six the next morning. The marquis offered to introduce me to them, and curiosity made me accept his proposition. We arrived there in very good time, while the company was yet thin: but in a few minutes the assembly became as numerous and brilliant as what I have seen in an opera, with only this difference, that at the princess's it was composed of men only, dressed some of them more richly than others. Several halls, in the midst of which stood tables appointed for the different games, were illuminated in every part. Scarce did they all seem sufficient to contain the numbers that crowded them. As the marquis was one of the bankers at basset, he left me to assume his post, which must certainly be very lucrative, since it constituted the principal part of his revenue. What surprised me the most, after viewing the company some moments, was to see a great number of ecclesiasticks

fiasticks among the cabals of the gamesters. My first reflection made me look on them as a parcel of dupes: yet I could not resist the caprice of fortune, who I saw was ruining some, and showering down her favours on others. I had fifty Lewis's left, which I always carried in my pocket. Seduced by ill example, I hazarded some of them, which in less than an hour were increased to near an hundred times as many. The fortunate success of this first attempt did not permit me to stop short in so delightful a road: I was animated by the desire of gain to pursue my point, and staked my money with so little prudence, that in a few moments I lost not only what I had won, but the fifty pieces I had in my purse, which was my whole stock of ready cash.

Such is the fatal passion of gaming, that whether a man wins or loses, he can never contain himself within reasonable bounds. For my part, distracted to see myself two hundred Lewis's worse than I had thought myself just before, without reflecting that three fourths of this number belonged perhaps to those who had now won them from me, I could not take the resolution to become wise at my own expence. I went directly to the marquis, who was in another hall, and asked him to lend me twenty-five pieces upon a diamond of value that I had on my finger. He would not accept the pledge, but told me down in a moment the sum I demanded. These twenty five Lewis's were insufficient to recover my lost fortune: they
lasted

lasted me however, with good management, to the end of the play when I had only three or four left. With these I retired full of chagrin, as I saw myself obliged to a new sale of my jewels, in order to recruit my pockets, and make satisfaction to a friend who had trusted me on my word.

How prejudicial soever the meeting of the marquis had been to my small fortune, my acknowledgments to him were not the less warm. He had lent me money in the most obliging manner, and hearing, as we came out, that I had lost it, he made me an offer of the like sum, which I accepted on the condition that he should come and dine with me. At this meeting, I confess, I found him altogether worthy of the good fortune he enjoyed; and, gratefully sensible of this double proof of his friendship, I thought I could not do better than lay open to him all my circumstances. He did not seem to think them so desperate as I did, especially after taking an inventory of my jewels, which he valued at above one hundred thousand franks. My condition however seemed to affect him, and, in order to repay my freedom of speech, at least apparently, in the same coin, he advised me to turn my effects into money, and by making presents to purchase the place of gentlemen to the princess, whose bounty he lived on. Chevalier, said he, in the most insinuating tone, a man of your figure may have pretensions enough at such a court as we are in, especially when reason, more than love

love, engages him to a woman of the princess's age and inclinations. For my part, who am no longer amorous, far from proving your rival on such an occasion, I shall see with joy your fortune equal to my own, since it may very well be so without the least prejudice to me. If you had some employment which gave you access to the princess, it would not be long, I am certain, before you came in snacks with us; and your recompense, as well as mine now is, would be to become an eighth sharer in the profits which our gaming stock produces; for the most famous academy in Paris is kept in her palace. As all the prime nobility punctually attend there, and we bankers at basset and pharaoh understand the play perfectly well, our office brings us in an immense annual fund. In a word, chevalier, if you except only a few presents which her royal highness now and then honours me with, it is this fund that supports all my expences on the foot that you see them.

If I had a grateful sense of the marquis's first civilities, I had a much greater of those offers, which gave me the prospect of a fortune as brilliant as his, and to which all my ambition tended. I was almost beside myself with respect, and could not tell how to express my thanks in terms sufficiently strong. I am entirely yours, cried I, my dear marquis: dispose of me as you please. From this time I will conform my conduct to your advice, which I will follow with all the confidence that your

T

good

good will deserves from an old friend who can never forget you.

After having again assured me, that he had nothing more at heart than to oblige me, Were I, said he, in your place, the first thing I would do should be to sell my jewels. Money you well know is at this day the *primum mobile* of all things. One part will serve to support you a little in the way of life you have taken up; and the rest must be employed in making presents to the princess's ladies of honour, to whom I will immediately introduce you. By this means you will soon become her highness's gentleman: you must accept this post at first without any salary; and that point being carried, your whole future fortune will be in your own hands. The marquis ended his enchanting discourse by offering to take on himself the disposal of my jewels, which he pretended he could make as much of as any jeweller.

If I had reflected, at that moment, on the marquis's former way of life, of which I knew a thousand anecdotes not very favourable to his reputation, perhaps my distrust had made me escape all his snares: but, dazzled with a future prospect that flattered my vanity, I received with joy an offer in which there seemed to be nothing but the most obliging sincerity. I was even in haste to put him in possession of the remainder of my fortune, and had so little foresight or suspicion of the misfortune that threatned me, that I slept with the same tranquility as a man could who
was

was in the full enjoyment of all his wishes. My security appeared so much the better founded, as the marquis came to visit me the next day, and brought me a thousand crowns for a diamond which I had never valued at more than two thousand livres, and which in my present necessity I would have parted with for less. So great was his affection, that scarce would he receive the fifty Louis's he had lent me.

A month however past, and he had not yet found an opportunity to dispose of the rest of my effects, or to bring me before the princess. A certain confused air that I saw in him, every time I went to visit him, began to give birth to some suspicions in my breast. Many particular friends, to whom I communicated the affair, compleated my dissatisfaction ; for they told me that his reputation was not better in Paris than in the country where I had known him. At length, opening my eyes on my own misfortune, I hunted and teized him in such a manner, that, after having put me off from day to day, at the end of two months he gave me a parcel of false stones, so like those I had trusted him with that I gave him a receipt in full, and utterly debarred myself from all future demands upon him.

C H A P. V.

Difficulties the Author is left in thro' the knavery of the Marquis. To get out of them he is obliged to sell his equipage. The condition he is reduced to, and his resolution to quit Paris.

TOO happy in being got out of the claws of a sharper, with whom I thought I had now no farther business, I was determined, for the time to come, to act with more caution, and not be the dupe of my own credulity. A friend, whom I had chosen with judgment, recommended me to a jeweller, a man of great wealth and interest, who bought all that I was willing to sell, at a less considerable price indeed than the marquis had taken them, but much more real, because he told me down on the nail the sum he had agreed for. It amounted to forty five thousand livres, which made then my whole capital, and was my last resource. At the rate I went on, this was not more than sufficient for a single year. As I entertained however fresh hopes every day of ASTAROTH's return, who I was assured by a certain inward confidence had not abandoned me, I could not find in my heart to retrench any thing from my equipage, till I was forced
to

to it by an event that I had been very far from expecting.

About a fortnight after the sale of my jewels, one fine sun-shiny morning, just as I rose, came in the jeweller to whom I had sold them, the friend who had procured me his acquaintance, and two other persons whom I did not know, but who by their deportment seemed to be officers of justice. As I had not the least apprehension of what was the occasion of this visit, I received them in a frank manner, and desired them all to sit down. Scarce had they done so when the jeweller, with an air of coldness, gave me back the goods I had sold him, and asked me whether I knew them to be the same that he had bought of me. Without question, said I, I do; as in reality I did. We must let you know then, added my friend, that the whole cargo is merely counterfeited, and not worth a hundred crowns. The gentleman is come therefore to bring them you again, and to demand back his money.

The surprise this compliment threw me into, had like to have made me die away on the spot. I was above a quarter of an hour before I was able to speak two intelligible words. At last, being with some assistance brought to myself, I told the jeweller and my friend that they might have been so kind as to come by themselves, without bringing those witnesses of what had passed, whom I now perceived to be a commissary and a notary: that if I had deceived them, I had much more to complain of

than they, for that I had been first deceived myself, and all the loss, by what I could see, was like to light upon me only. In a word, I owned to them in what manner I had trusted to the marquis DAMOISI, and asked their advice as to the proper method I must take in order to bring him to justice.

DAMOISI was so well known in Paris, that no sooner had I pronounced his name, but the two officers declared they could do nothing but pity me. If you should sue him, said they, what would your pretensions signify without proofs, especially against a sharper who has such powerful protectors? The marquis will make it appear, by your receipts, that he restored to you the very individual jewels that you had entrusted him with. He will afterwards sue you for reparation of his injured honour, and you will find all the costs, besides damages, fixed on yourself.—In a word, the result of their opinion came only to this, that my misfortune was entirely without remedy. Mean time I was obliged upon the nail to reimburse the forty five thousand livres which I had received; after which the jeweller and his attendants went their ways, and left me a prey to the most sorrowful reflections.

I was now unhappily in a situation which required me to act with the utmost prudence: but the grief of seeing myself reduced to this extremity, made me lose all my wonted moderation. Despair was the guide that conducted me to the marquis, when, without any respect
to

to some persons of quality that were then with him, I treated him like the worst of scoundrels, and challenged him to fight me. My rage had indeed made me like one distracted, and the marquis very calmly pretended to consider me in that character, and to disregard all my threats. As he knew however all the tricks of the law, and had witnesses of my insults, the villain thought proper to prevent my suing him, and begun a prosecution against me for injury done to his honour. Such a flagrant piece of impudence, made me lose the little remainder of my senses. The justice of my cause seemed to me so visible, that I was resolved to push the affair with all imaginable vigour: and in order to be able to do this, I determined that moment to dispose of all my plate, which I did even to the very ring I had on my finger. But the business became so intricate, that the money I made of these, did but a very little advance it. I had even the mortification to hear that the cause went so much against me, as to put my poor carcase in no small danger. The dread of being arrested at last opened my eyes; I saw the necessity of submitting to my ill fortune, and came to the resolution to discharge all my servants, and sell my equipage. This was the final temporary remedy of my present extremity, and what threw me down at once from a man of rank and figure, to the condition of a private poor fellow.

All

All my stock did not amount to above a thousand crowns, and I was more than two thousand in debt. My creditors, informed of my situation, dunned me incessantly. My friends all forsook me; and my servants, who had certainly had one of the kindest of masters, were the first to publish what they knew of my wretchedness. My relations themselves, who, dazzled with the lustre of my splendid appearance, had offered up their incense to my very faults, were my most open and avowed enemies. In this extremity, I soon perceived that I had no remedy left but that of flying the country, and I was not long in resolving to quit a place, where I had nothing before me but the most melancholy prospects.

CHAP VI.

The evening before his departure the Author has a vision, which obliges him to go the next day to the palace of Luxembourg. His rencounter with ASTAROTH there: The several conversations they have together, and their concerting a new ramble.

LIKE those who have no other guide but their own inclinations, which they blindly pursue, I did not begin to reflect on all the irregularities of my conduct, till I was no longer

ger able to reform them. Dear self-love would not permit me to lay all the blame of them on my own individual, and I bore very heavily on the infidelity of *ASTAROTH*, and his breach of those promises I so much relied on. As little likelihood as I had of seeing him again, I could not prevail on myself to banish his idea from my mind, and to forget a friend by whose assistance I had supported myself many years. My only consolation was to feed my fancy with the hopes of his return, and I invoked him every day with the same confidence that a Spaniard supplicates some good saint to be propitious to him in his amours.

I was just upon the point of taking my leave of Paris, when, agitated by such thoughts as these, a gentle slumber at once took possession of my senses. My heated imagination presented *ASTAROTH* to my sight, under the form that he wore when he took his leave of me. Methought we were walking together in the Luxembourg garden, and that he heaped on me more riches than I had squandered away during his absence. But this felicity, to my great disappointment, was of short duration; all my golden joys vanished with my sleep. This flattering dream however had made so much impression on my mind, that I put off my departure for a few hours, in order to visit the place awake which had given me so much pleasure in my sleep. In short, this impression, was of the same kind with those which your enthusiasts

call

call irresistible: I have therefore relied much on such sort of visions ever since.

Scarce was I arrived at the Luxembourg garden, but I fled to the spot which was still present to my imagination. There I perceived a little ill-shaped man, who saluted me with a smile. Surprised at his complaisance, I went up to him, and desired to be informed if he had any knowledge of me. My name, which he had at his tongue's end, at the same time informing me that he had seen me in Italy, redoubled my astonishment: but what appeared to me yet more incomprehensible, was, that in a moment he gave me such a detail of a great number of anecdotes relating to my life, that I could not question the reality of his pretended acquaintance with me. I could not reflect, however, on my having seen him in any place, and he diverted himself along time before he made himself known.

In short, it was no other than *ASTAROTH* himself, who, in one of his diabolical whims, had chosen the very ugliest body upon the face of the earth. Do not reproach me, chevalier, said he, after he had declared who he was: the time of my absence has been longer than I intended; but you did me justice in believing, when I did not appear to your evocations, that I was hindered by some superior order. Besides, I could be of no service to you against the marquis *DAMOISI*, who is protected by one of the greatest princes of our empire. But comfort yourself in respect of the loss he has made

made you sustain, and continue at Paris to be a spectator of the sudden reverse of his fortune. In a word, you will soon see him lock'd up in a jail, from which he shall escape only to become a fugitive in a foreign country.

• Does your devilship banter me? said I to the quondam HERMIT. How does what you say hang together? The marquis is protected by a Demon of the first order, and yet will sink under the weight of his adverse fortune.— Indeed chevalier, answered he, both the one and the other are literally true. You must know then that the marquis's protector has something else to do than to watch for ever over one man. It is his way to engage himself only for a limited time. The client that has got him in his interest, must take care to keep him by his own good conduct: for this prince is very much like those of your hemisphere. When he knows a subject proper for our empire, he closely besets him, and uses every stratagem to win him over; but when he has once got hold of him, the man's whole business is done; the Demon abandons him, and goes in search of some other prey. Such will be the lot of the marquis DAMOISI, who owes his wealth and advancement to the said prince. Incapable of living within bounds, the moment he is left to his own conduct, he shall run in debt, and commit so many sharpening tricks as shall deprive him of the many powerful friends that now support him. You will see him then act a character in another place, very different from that brilliant one which he has lately sustained.

If

If that be the case, said I, I shall have the satisfaction of seeing him as wretched as myself, with only this difference, that he is possessed of talents which I want, and has the art of exchanging counterfeit jewels for real ones.—What then, cried he, do you no longer number me among your friends, that you think yourself in such a miserable situation? Satisfy yourself, chevalier, that I am a devil of strict honour, and incapable of being worse than my word. Have not I promised to assist you in all your difficulties? —But your honour, said I, had forgot me for some time; or at least, if you did not abandon me voluntarily, the power that detained you elsewhere, left me in the necessity of making my own way out of my late tribulation, without your assistance.

You ought to consider, said ASTAROTH, that one can enter into no engagement beyond one's power; nor can one be responsible for cross accidents that may now and then happen. When I left you just without Paris, my design was only to support the interest of an enterprising young lord, who has put himself under my protection. But scarce had I done with him, before the rank I then held obliged me to pay my attendance at the conclave, which now makes so much noise. Thanks to my genius, I have so embarrassed the minds of my colleagues, that I believe they will not easily agree in electing a person to preside over the church. Our power, to speak the truth, does not extend so far as to stop the course of fate: but it is great enough

enough to disturb all human affairs, and I have just now made use of my right in a manner that will open a great many eyes. Upon my sincerity, my dear chevalier, I could have wished you had been my companion: you would have beheld a conclave of the most humorous orthodoxy. There would have been no occasion to give you an exposition of what they were about: you must have understood at once, that all the members could be animated by no other spirits but those of my species. At present, while things are just in the situation that I would wish to have them, I have an opportunity to withdraw in order to serve you, well knowing the great need you have of my assistance.

I am very much obliged to your eminence, good lord ASTAROTH. The sight of you has dispelled all my uneasiness, and provided you never abandon me again, I am persuaded that every thing will go well. But may I be so bold as to ask you a short question? How could your eminence prevail on yourself to quit a body of such high rank, and submit to take on you the miserable form you now appear in? These are reasons of state, said he, that I will give you an account of another time. My business was to withdraw from the enquiries of my superiours. As they knew me to be proudly inclined, I imagined they would never think of searching for me in such a body as this. Deformed however as I am, you ought not to have a bit the worse opinion of me. Tell me

U

only

only what you would wish to be, and I will give you proof that I am always your friend.

If the different situations of life were in the choice of mankind, I answered, I should be glad to be restored to that which I was lately in; or if it was more brilliant, so much the better. Plague on your fine taste, cried ASTAROTH; do you think me master of all the riches in the universe? I beg of you to be a little more modest, and have some regard to the pockets of your friends. You should consider that one who demands more than can be given him, may be sure of obtaining nothing.—Very true, answered I; but I ask for no more than the means of triumphing for a short time, over those who have turned their backs on me during my misfortunes: when this is done we will leave Paris, and make what figure you please in another place.—Your proposal is very reasonable, reply'd ASTAROTH, and suits my humour: this very evening you shall go to the princess d'E**'s, and as I know a little more of play than even the bankers themselves, you may depend upon bringing off a sum sufficient to content your wishes. I have along while owed those gentlemen such a cast of my skill. They have made so many dupes, that I cannot but think it equitable that they should be, for once, made so themselves. Besides, we are in a country where it is the established custom for the greatest sharper to trick the rest. This city, in fact,
is

is the chief academy of the best subjects of our empire. Turn your head a little on the right side, added the metamorphosed hermit, and observe those two persons who are talking warmly together. That large lubbard, with a buttery phiz, is a Provencial: his name is DAMAT, and all his business is to look out for novices in the art of gaming. Wherever he goes, he sets up for sale both his wife and his religion: but as neither of them is of any great value, he does not disdain to be the Mercury of those who are willing to employ him. His capacity, though pretty extensive in the art of intrigues, is yet nothing in comparison of that of the young man who is with him. Their friendship began in Holland. Observe with what heat they talk together. The subject of their conversation is a certain mantua-maker, who has heaped together a great deal of riches, and whom they are resolved to have the picking of. The measures they take are infallible: the poor girl will at once lose both her honour and her fortune, after which death will soon send her into our dominions.

But how is it possible, cried I, that a young woman should be so weak as not to distrust a physiognomy so suspicious as that of our Provencial? It will not be he, answered ASTAROTH, that shall do the business; all his present employment is to go in quest of new game. His wife assists him with a great deal of art; and the young man, who takes the rest on himself, will perform his part with wonderful address.

His deceitful countenance, his insinuating air, his enchanting prattle, make him sure of his prey. Indeed he very seldom fails of success. His trains sometimes are so well laid, that I should not blush to own myself the author of them even in hell. But very lately he found the secret of getting into the confidence of a nobleman of Geneva, whom he ruined with so much cunning, that the poor gentleman, ashamed of what had passed, thought it his best way to leave Paris without giving notice of it even to his servants. The affair happened in this manner.

The nobleman we speak of, whose name is the baron de PLANTAMOUR, is a very rich and amiable young fellow. He came to visit this city, and spent his time in admiring all the rarities worthy the curiosity of a man of pleasure. As he quartered in one of the most creditable inns, where nobody usually came but persons who were unsuspected, he was not long in getting a great number of acquaintance. Among others, he entered into a strict friendship with a rich merchant of Languedoc, who was in high credit with the bankers of Paris, and very well known in this inn, where he had lodged several times.

This merchant, to a very open and engaging behaviour, added a thousand valuable qualities, which made his company sought after. As he had travelled over all Europe, and been several times in Holland, fortune had thrown him, on different occasions, into the conversation

tion of the young man, whom you see discour-
sing with DAMAT. API, that is the fellow's
name, was ever ready to thrust himself for-
wards, and took the first opportunity to meet
our merchant abroad. Tho' he was in company
with the baron de PLANTAMOUR, and many
other gentlemen, our young adventurer, who
has a very happy memory, singled him out by
name, remembred he had seen him at his fa-
ther's house, and saluted him with all the im-
pudence imaginable. When he mentioned his
own name, the merchant, who knew nothing
of his wicked life, nor the bad circumstances
his father was in, received him with great po-
liteness. API never lets slip so favourable an
opportunity: he perceived the necessity of pas-
sing now for a man of importance, and told
the merchant that he was private seeretary to
a minister of state: then, by coldly inviting him
and the baron his friend to come and sup with
him, he got himself engaged to go and spend
the evening with them.

The Genevan and Languedocian were both of
a sprightly temper, and no enemies to gallantry.
API, more subtle than many subjects of our
empire, took them by their foible, boasted that
he enjoyed the favour of a certain duchess,
and offered to make them known to her. E-
very night, says he, towards twelve o'clock,
I go to the garden of the palace royal. As they
shut the gates about that time, when all the
company is gone out, the duchess, who has a
private door from her house into this garden,

always punctually comes there, with one of her sisters and a chambermaid, who are both yet more beautiful than herself, but pass away their moments very poorly together, while madam and I are in the most exquisite transports. Either I am very much mistaken, continued he, or I can dare assure you that they will receive with joy the proposition that I shall make them, of helping each of them to an amiable lover, and a lover by so much the more secret as he will not know them, for so you must pretend not to do. This night, with your consent, I will set the negociation on foot, and if it succeeds, as I make no question it will, you may accompany me thither to-morrow night.

The proposed adventure was too singular, not to excite the curiosity of our strangers. They declared their acceptance of it ; and the next night young API did not fail to wait on them, and let them know that they should very soon be as happy as himself. Imagine what preparations the amorous baron, and his friend the merchant, made for this meeting. All that art could furnish them with, to set off their persons to advantage, was employed in their dress. The baron, as the richest of the three, and the best stocked with jewels, made the most brilliant figure. At the appointed hour they all came together to the place of rendezvous ; the gates were shut, and three ladies in rich dishabille immediately appeared. ' API's apple' was the watch word, which was no sooner given by one of these nocturnal beauties, but our
thres

three cavaliers came up to them. Every couple soon grew familiar ; one to one was an equal match, and they passed away some hours with the utmost satisfaction. At last, when day began to peep, the ladies thought it time to retire, and the hopes of renewing their pleasures the following night, seemed to leave a delightful impression on all the parties. The galants were led silently out of the palace, and about three o'clock in the morning they found themselves in the Rue de Richelieu.

As young API could not, at this unseasonable hour, go home to the minister's whose secretary he called himself, he proposed to the baron and his friend to spend a few hours at a coffee-house he knew, and where he was certain, he told them, of getting in when he pleased. They refused to comply, and invited him, on the contrary, to give them his company to their inn, where their servants sat up for them.

API, who had projected his whole plan, made some objections to retard the time, and kept them standing in the street, to relate several particulars of his amours with his duchess. They were at last just upon the point of parting, when three well dressed gentlemen came along the same street, whom the young impostor pretended to know, and said one was a Count, the other a Marquis, and the third a Knight. He added to these titles, the names of families well known, in order to prevent all suspicion. By heavens! cried he, with a foppish tone, I must enquire where these larks have been.

As

As they came nearer, he advanced towards them, and addressing himself directly to him that made the best appearance, Marquis, says he, may one make bold to ask you what gallant adventure has made you ramble the streets at this time of night? This question was followed by many others, till the three accidental gentlemen joined in company with A P I and his two friends. It was then quickly known that the chevalier dwelt just by, and a proposition was made to go to his house, in order to give one another an account how they had all passed their time. It was in vain for the baron and the merchant to oppose the motion: they had to do with people who had too much interest in securing their company, and they were obliged to submit to their importunity.

It was happy for the Languedocian, that he did not want for presence of mind. Under pretence of stopping a moment at the corner of a street, he found means to get off, and retire to his lodging, where he informed the baron's domesticks that he had left their master in good company. The honest merchant was very sincere in what he said: far from suspecting the danger his friend was in, his only reason for leaving him, was to write some letters which his business made necessary. The baron, for his part, who knew the merchant to be a man of sincerity, and was acquainted with his affairs, was less surprized at his quitting the company, than at the manner in which he got away. Perswaded that he was in the hands of gentle-

gentlemen, he thought it his duty to excuse his friend, and alledge in his favour all the reasons that he thought the most plausible, to reconcile them to his desertion.

Though the sharpers were really mortified at having lost a part of their prey, they yet pretended to take the thing well, and in a manner suitable to the characters they represented. The chevalier, to support the honours of his house, ordered a cold collation to be set before his guests, and called for flasks of wine in abundance; in emptying of which they all heartily joined, and no man more so than our baron. After they had eat and drank their fill, cards were brought on the table, and one of the company proposed a game at lansquenet. The baron de PLANTAMOUR, whose head was warmed with the wine, came into the proposition without the least demur. In a word, the artifice of the four impostors, assisted by their good fortune, made him lose, in less than two hours, all his ready money and all his jewels, without excepting even his watch, his cane, his sword, and a gold tweezer that had his arms engraved on it.

Our too credulous baron coming to himself, after this great loss, could perceive easily that there was something more than good luck in the manner of play which the pretended noblemen he was with had made use of. But all the mischief was done, and his sword, which he knew well how to use, was no longer in his power. In vain did he offer to redeem that,
and

and his other principal moveables, by a note of hand, payable in twenty four hours; they only laughed at him, and obliged him to be gone, unless he would run a greater risque than that of being stripped of his all. Enraged and ashamed to see himself the dupe of such despicable scoundrels, he had not resolution to take the necessary means of bringing them to signal and exemplary justice. This experiment had made him wise, and he chose rather to suppress his choler, than to communicate it to persons who perhaps would have made it publick, and have taken the liberty moreover of diverting selves at his expence. He resolved to set out the same day for Geneva, his native place, and with that view applied himself to a friend he could confide in, who furnished him with what money he wanted for his journey, and took on himself the charge of sending after him his baggage and his servants. Yet all these precautions were not sufficient to prevent the publication of this affair. The merchant, who thought his honour in some measure concerned in it, took it in hand, and prosecuted it vigorously: but the officers of justice pay no regard to his remonstrances, except when he delivers them with money in hand. As he has no proof against API and his accomplices, and founds his prosecution merely on report, the only effect of his complaints will be, to make his purse somewhat the lighter.

In the mean time API, hardened as he is, dreads the consequence of this affair. He is con-
certing

ing with DAMAT in what manner to deceive the rich mantua-maker I mentioned, in order to make off with her spoils. They will bring the matter to bear before a week is at an end, and the fellow now before us takes it for granted, that he shall get a hundred pistoles clear by this specimen of his art.

How it will please me, cried I, if the ill-looking rascal should at last fall short of his reckoning! As to that matter, replied ASTAROTH, you may make your self as merry with him as you please beforehand; for the poor dog will not get a half-penny by the bargain. API, who has ten times the cunning of him, will lull him to sleep with his different schemes, while he carries off the girl, and all her effects, without letting him know a word of the matter. So much the better, said I. API then will play the part of a fox, and DAMAT that of the cat, who with her paw takes the chesnuts out of the fire. The rogue deserves well to be bit of a salary, which is the wages of so much sin: but I pity the poor girl without knowing her, and, if it was in my power, I would gladly avert from her the misfortunes that hang over her head.

Fie upon you, chevalier! answered ASTAROTH: you must divest yourself of all such sentiments of humanity. Take my word for it, sir, you must have a very good stock of compassion, to exert it in behalf of all who seem to deserve it. Look a little before you there, and note well that company of citizens.
Observe

Observe the tall man that walks in the midst of them, with a black coat and perruque. That is an ecclesiastic metamorphosed to a bookseller, who keeps the famous shop over-against St BERNEDICT's cloister. If I was to give you an account of all the families he has ruined, by pretending to serve them, I should furnish matter for a volume in folio. Tho' he has taken in a great many of his brethren in foreign countries, by selling them old books under new titles, he has never got near so much by bookselling as by lending on mortgages or pledges at an exorbitant interest. All this while you would take him, by his looks and conversation, to be one of the most formidable enemies of our empire. No man, in outward appearance, has more strict honour: yet no man knows better the art of picking your feathers, without permitting you to make any noise. By this means he has amassed very large sums, a part of which only brings him an income of thirty thousand livres per annum. As he is very covetous, and would never marry for fear of charges, all his wealth will descend to nephews, who wait impatiently for his decease, in order to make another use of it than he has done.

Carry your eye a little farther, and observe that large company, composed of men and women, and some who look neither like the one nor the other. That abbé, whose hairs begin to grow grey, is well received in the best houses in Paris, tho' he is publicly known for the father of two children, which his own sister has taken
the

the pains to bring into the world. The poor girl, who is run mad with remorse of conscience, is kept closely confined, and passes away her time in the most deplorable manner; while the good brother, by way of consolation for his loss, regales himself with that little brown bit that you see there by his side.

That other abbé, who is so sprucely powdered out, and whose gallantries are shocking to all that hear of them, is a priest without religion, who has tried every trade he knew of for forty years past, which is the time he has been in the world. Like a trueameleon, he first quitted the band for the sword and the cockade, and then abandoned that for the habit of a benedictine, and the religion of a monk. He visited several countries, and behaved in them all with so little prudence, that, if it had not been for the help of my brethren, he had died ignominiously on a gallows. Having escaped a public execution, he returned into France, where the protection of an illustrious princess, who values merit wherever she sees it, at present secures him from all prosecutions. He has now resumed his religion, found the secret of changing his order, of battenning at his ease, and even of making his company coveted by persons of quality; tho' not one of them is ignorant that he lives with a creature, who has been the outcast of a number of worthless fellows of his own profession.

I know the man well ASTAROTH, answered I, of whom you are speaking. He has ac-
X
quired

quired some reputation by his well-digested and very amusing writings. His faults are detested, I acknowledge it; but his conversation is admired, for the sake of which all his little irregularities are easily over-looked. For my part, I cannot but think he has suffered sufficiently for what he has done, and that the person who preserved him from a halter, would have rendered him a much more considerable service, if he could have secured him from ever falling again in the same unhappy and scandalous manner.

It ought by no means to surprise you that he could not, replied my quondam HERMIT. Tho' our power be pretty extensive, yet it is not sufficient to make us the masters of future events. Ever since the world has existed, there has reigned a perpetual war between you men, and the people of my species, in which, tho' we are most commonly victors, yet are we sometimes vanquished. If we could foresee every thing, chevalier, you mortals would all wish to be in our condition; whereas there is nothing that men now so much dread, as a transition from their state to ours, tho' indeed they all act in such a manner, as that very few of them go any other way.

But who, said I, is that effeminate young fellow with reddish hair, that seems to carry himself so haughtily? That, answers ASTAROTH, is Don I. B. A. P. VASQUES DE HERMILLOSAS, esq; lord of Herbencour, &c. Hold! cried I; what a number of names and titles

titles you are giving indeed. Without question he is a true-born Spaniard.— Verily, chevalier, not he: but it was in Spain, where he lived miserably for many years, that he assumed these titles, spaniolized his name, put the Don before it, and took on him the lofty air so natural to that nation: Paris however is the place of his nativity. He is the son of a woman who had wit enough to procure him several fathers. Besides the commonly reputed one, two gentlemen of fortune took that honour on themselves. The good lady knew how to make the most of their foolish credulity, and found means to draw from each of them pretty large sums, part of which she spent herself, and the remainder the son is lately come into possession of, his mother dying very à propos to raise him from the lowest degree of poverty. As he has been used to live by his wits, and is now resolved never to pay one of his debts, his design is to travel in the character of a gentleman: but I give him only two years to make a figure in, after which he will plunge again into greater misery than that which surrounded him before his mother's death.

Do you see that dapper ecclesiastic, who is going in at the Carmelite's gate? Is it not, said I, the celebrated preceptor-general of the publick? The very man, answered my guide; the very individual abbé de FRE, the most intriguing of mankind, and who surpasses all for a subtle imagination. He has made so many dupes in his life, that he now passes for

a magician among those of his own habit... It is a thousand pities he is not always successful. Some time ago he failed in a very masterly attempt, thro' the address of a famous merchant, who proved more cunning than he. This celebrated author, in love with certain notes that he had made upon some antient writer, and more in love with a coarse satirical dedication that he had prefixed to them, addressed to the prince of modern poets under a borrowed name, found the art of setting his work so well off to a very rich man, that he obtained from him a letter of credit into Holland, whither he was going, to receive such money there as he should want for the beautiful impression of this extraordinary book. He was at first very well received there, till the merchant, to whom he was recommended, having discovered that the abbé's intention was to appropriate to himself the whole edition, and send it privately abroad for his own advantage, he took such effectual measures, and put them in execution with so much prudence, that Monsieur found himself grievously out in his reckoning, at the very moment when he thought his stratagem infallible; and thus taught mankind, at his own expence, how dangerous it is to attempt the circumvention of those who were more subtle than themselves. He has since indeed pretty well revenged his ill success upon a great number of others; but as all his tricks would take up too much time in the relation, I chuse rather to
turn

turn to some of those other persons who stand around us.

Observe that fine gentleman there, who appears so richly dressed. He is a riding-master of great reputation, whose generous soul inclines him to spend another's fortune as if it was his own. The gaiety which you see expanded all over his face, proceeds from his having lately made a conveyance of certain effects he was never possessed of, by which means he has got a discharge for above a hundred thousand crowns. His wife, who is very rich, but would never pay any of his debts, has just now set him upon his legs. Now he is in better circumstances than ever, he begins again to run in debt, as knowing he has nothing more to do, when he comes to a fresh pinch, but to declare himself a second time insolvent, and make a new cession of his goods. That lady, all bespattered with red and white, to whom he advances with so much respect, is a woman of pleasure, who will this night surrender to his desires for a bill of two thousand crowns. The tall man whom you see at a little distance from them, and who seems so very poor, had never been in that miserable condition, had not fortune too rapidly favoured him. Drunk with the overflowing cup, which he has thought could never be exhausted, he gave himself up to a course of luxury which has reduced him to the necessity of asking alms of those who pass by. Amongst the many numbers who had felt the good effects of his affluence, scarce does

he find one that now extends to him the charitable hand. They fly him like a man infected with some contagious distemper; and good reason have they for so doing, because in a nation where all men's thoughts are employed about pleasures and good living, there is no vice so horrible as misery, there is no evil so much to be dreaded as want of money.

ASTAROTH now seemed to ogle a great great many other persons, with whose adventures doubtless he was going to entertain me, when I suddenly interrupted him, to put him in mind of his promise. The evening, says I, comes on apace: I am in great want of something to eat, and not less impatient to be at the hotel d'E**. Notwithstanding my importunity, he was very loth to comply with my request. What a pity is it, says he, to leave this charming walk, just at the time when it begins to be full of company! What an adventure could I now relate to you, would you but lend me your ear a little! Every thing round us is exquisite and charming! Look at that lady all covered with diamonds, who passes along by us: should not you take her for a princess of the blood royal? But alas! she is nothing less than that. Her husband, from a perwig maker, is become a farmer of the excise, which has made him so immensely rich, that he now vies with the first men in the kingdom. The gentleman at her left, is a person of high birth, but very small fortune. All his aim is to mend the latter, by marrying that young lady

lady which is on the other side, and who is the daughter and only heiress of the farmer's wife. This affair has been a long while in his head, and he perfectly doats with ruminating on it. Madam, who has a respect for him, takes the utmost pains to discover the cause of his melancholy: but the cavalier has not yet trusted the secret with any body, except miss herself, (who is very prudent,) and one chambermaid, whom he bribes beyond his ability, to engage her to keep alive the sacred fire of love in the heart of her mistress. Miss, who has not a bit less inclination than her mother had at the same age, is resolved to tread exactly in her steps. In a very little while her lover shall carry her off, at the mother's expence, and agreeable to her advice, who shall furnish her with what money she wants, without knowing it is to be employed against herself. But the young gentleman's fidelity will be of short duration: a clandestine marriage will utterly ruin him, and all who have any hand in it. This affair will even become so important, that all Europe shall take part in it.

Let us now turn, and examine that pretty young lady who walks towards the parterre, in company with a knight of Malta. She is a female Dutch merchant, immensely rich. A diminutive little fellow, without a farthing of money, found the secret of charming her, with verses that he bought upon trust; but not without a promise of paying generously for them, in case he succeeded. His marriage having been celebrated,

he find one that now extends to him the charitable hand. They fly him like a man infected with some contagious distemper; and good reason have they for so doing, because in a nation where all men's thoughts are employed about pleasures and good living, there is no vice so horrible as misery, there is no evil so much to be dreaded as want of money.

ASTAROTH now seemed to ogle a great great many other persons, with whose adventures doubtless he was going to entertain me, when I suddenly interrupted him, to put him in mind of his promise. The evening, says I, comes on apace: I am in great want of something to eat, and not less impatient to be at the hotel d'E**. Notwithstanding my importunity, he was very loth to comply with my request. What a pity is it, says he, to leave this charming walk, just at the time when it begins to be full of company! What an adventure could I now relate to you, would you but lend me your ear a little! Every thing round us is exquisite and charming! Look at that lady all covered with diamonds, who passes along by us: should not you take her for a princess of the blood royal? But alas! she is nothing less than that. Her husband, from a periwig maker, is become a farmer of the excise, which has made him so immensely rich, that he now vies with the first men in the kingdom. The gentleman at her left, is a person of high birth, but very small fortune. All his aim is to mend the latter, by marrying that young lady

lady which is on the other side, and who is the daughter and only heiress of the farmer's wife. This affair has been a long while in his head, and he perfectly doats with ruminating on it. Madam, who has a respect for him, takes the utmost pains to discover the cause of his melancholy : but the cavalier has not yet trusted the secret with any body, except miss herself, (who is very prudent,) and one chambermaid, whom he bribes beyond his ability, to engage her to keep alive the sacred fire of love in the heart of her mistress. Miss, who has not a bit less inclination than her mother had at the same age, is resolved to tread exactly in her steps. In a very little while her lover shall carry her off, at the mother's expence, and agreeable to her advice, who shall furnish her with what money she wants, without knowing it is to be employed against herself. But the young gentleman's fidelity will be of short duration : a clandestine marriage will utterly ruin him, and all who have any hand in it. This affair will even become so important, that all Europe shall take part in it.

Let us now turn, and examine that pretty young lady who walks towards the parterre, in company with a knight of Malta. She is a female Dutch merchant, immensely rich. A diminutive little fellow, without a farthing of money, found the secret of charming her, with verses that he bought upon trust ; but not without a promise of paying generously for them, in case he succeeded. His marriage having been celebrated,

celebrated, the mean-spirited rascal, dazzled with his wealth, forgot the poet who was author both of his verses and his fortune: but the latter, whom no man could ever injure without feeling his revenge, found means to decoy his debtor to his own house, and there, with a knife held to his throat, extorted from him a bond for the sum he demanded. The new-married man, who had been influenced by fear only, was no sooner out of danger, than he commenced a suit, and had the poet arrested. Unhappily he was in a country where nothing could be done without proof: the plaintiff could produce none, and the defendant set forth his cause with so much presence of mind, that he came off with triumph, and got of the merchant very large expences, besides such considerable damages, that he was obliged to break, and fly the country. The young lady, who repented her having taken a husband of so little prudence, used him with the contempt he deserved, and supplies her loss of him with the company of that gentleman who is by her, and whom she amply furnishes with all the means of luxury. As the husband too spends very freely, their stock visibly diminishes every day: so that if death does not prevent them in time, they will be reduced to the same condition they were once in.

But, good lord ASTAROTH, said I again, I am in a worse situation than you imagine; I am really so very weak, that I doubt I have not strength enough to go home to my

OWN

own lodging, ——— Well, answered he, let us go into the first public-house we come to then, and never mind the expence we ran to, because we know how to make it up by-and-bye. He had no sooner done speaking, but we went towards the gate, just by which we entered into a famous house of entertainment, where we called about us like persons of great importance. I had lived so very indifferently for some time past'd, and all they brought upon table was so well dressed, that I could not satisfy my appetite. ASTAROTH stared at me with admiration. What a pity is it, said he, that we are obliged to leave this place!—What can we do, answered I? When one has no certain income, one must resolve to get a living in any way whatsoever. Let us go then, since fortune calls us, and neglect nothing that may render her propitious to our wishes.

This short heroic sally was occasioned by the exquisite meats and rich wines, which we had not spared in the least. As we had hired a coach for all the evening, we were very soon at the hotel d'E**, where ASTAROTH played with so much success, that when the gamesters broke up, we found ourselves near a hundred Louis's in pocket. This was a very considerable sum for a trial; and the bankers, who thought they knew what they were about, seemed surprized at it. Perhaps they suspected my faithful ASTAROTH to be a dealer in the black art: but, however that might be, they earnestly begged of him never to set foot within their liberties

berties again, and marked him out to the Swifts, who kept the door, as a very dangerous member to their academy. When we came to my lodgings, I was going to enter into discourse with him about what had passed; but the DEMON stopped me, What, said he, do you think I have nothing else to do every night, but to employ myself in this manner? You are ignorant, chevalier, what a dangerous place that gaming table is to me, and how I have exposed my self to serve you. Above three parts in four of the men who compose that numerous assembly, are inhabited by spirits of my species. I was in the utmost danger of being discovered, and therefore I pushed my fortune all at once. Have you not enough to satisfy your present desires? Is there not left in your power another considerable resource? Why do you not dispose of your jewels?—Of my jewels! cried I, with surprise. Did not I inform you in what manner I was tricked of them by the Marquis DAMOISI? that what I now have in my hands are unfaleable? and what dangers I was exposed to after having sold them to a jeweller? All that signifies nothing, replied my quondam HERMIT. It was your own fault that you ran any hazard at all. If you had quitted the city in time, the jeweller must have put up with his loss, and you would have had no room to complain of the Marquis. But à propos to that sharper; Do you know that he was arrested yesterday for debt, while we were walking together? The princess

cess, who found in him at first a pleasing lover, has lately expelled him her bank, and will no longer bear the mention of his name. It is lucky for him that his chymistry, which is the science he professes, has acquired him the protection of the chief prince of our empire. It will be thro' this resource that he shall regain his liberty; but so far from being able to support the figure he has hitherto made, he shall leave his prison only to become a fugitive among the antient Batavians, where his tricks being unknown, his chymical skill may get him a living. I intend to conduct you into the same country, this we are in not being sufficiently safe for my poor particular, because it is pestered with more devils errant than any other land in the universe.

CH A P. VII.

Idea of the Author. By the Advice of ASTAROTH he deceives his counterfeit Friend, sells his false Jewels for good ones, and sets out for Holland. A Description of that Country.

MY strong passion for travel has always made me receive with a sort of transport every proposition that had any tendency that way. ASTAROTH spoke to me of a country

try which I knew by reading only; -I was overjoyed to think of visiting it myself, and only asked of him a few days delay to satisfy my vanity. Though my stock was not very considerable, and amounted to no more than ten thousand franks, I yet ventured to hire a very splendid equipage, and took into my service as many domesticks as if I had had a hundred thousand franks per annum to expend. This pompous appearance very soon produced the desired effect I wished for: my friends, that had been eclipsed to me, became visible again in an instant, and I was proposing to give myself the satisfaction of reproaching their ingratitude and inconstancy, when ASTAROTH prevented me by a piece of advice worthy of himself.

All these fellows that make their court to you, said he, are no better than so many downright thieves, whose only aim is at your pocket. You have experienced how much you have been hurt by your generosity towards them, and therefore ought now to look upon them as your debtors, and to find means to pay yourself with interest all the long sums they owe you. It is a very common thing among them to offer to those they imagine have no need of it: you must pretend therefore that you have a mind to try them, and borrow of them all you can, without any other engagement than your word for repaying them again in a few days. ASTAROTH had too much dominion over my mind not to make all the impression there
he

he desired : I came readily into his project, and promised to put it in execution ; and as I had him continually for my counsellor, I acquitted myself with so much address, that in less than a month I redoubled my capital, without including my expences, which ran very high. This step being taken, I made no scruple of cheating an honest usurer, who lent me twenty five thousand livres upon my counterfeit jewels, which he took for real ones. We then set out immediately for Batavia, without losing any more time, and were both extremely well satisfied ; I, that I had duped my relations, and all my friends and acquaintance, with so much art ; and ASTAROTH, for the good success of his diabolical counsels.

To prevent my being discovered by any one, I had the precaution to discharge all my domesticks. My unfrocked HERMIT would not even permit me to take any others, offering to wait upon me himself on the road, and in all the towns where we made any stay. In this condition we advanced by large stages, and the second day we alighted on a high tower, on the borders of the country we were bound for. The prudent ASTAROTH had furnished himself with an excellent telescope, which he stole somewhere unknown to me. Here, says he, putting it into my hand, is somewhat to amuse you with. Take a view of all the places that are within the reach of this glass, and give me your opinion of them. I perceive, said I, after having looked through it, a very fine level country, all the lands of which are cultivated

vated with a care that seems to produce an abundance. So many beautiful and large cities, which look as if they touched each other, the stately houses that compose them, the vast and magnificent edifices with which they are adorned, all these give me the idea of a happy and benevolent people, who have enriched themselves by labour, and who now gather in peace the fruits of all their toils. Such a country, in my opinion, deserves our utmost attention; and I am very much inclined to make some stay there, before we proceed. Never think of any such thing, replied my quondam HERMIT; be satisfied with what you have already seen, which is all indeed worth seeing. The country is in fact what it appears, extensive, fertile, abounding with all things necessary for the preservation of mortals, and filled with fine cities at a small distance from each other; but these cities, formerly so flourishing, are become desert, through the bad policy of those who have been entrusted with the government of them. All the men of fortune, who had it in their power to make money circulate, have abandoned these parts, and there is now little to be seen in the country but just the tillage of the earth. Those who live in the cities spend their days in luxurious indolence, which not only makes them useless to society, but so very proud withal as to think themselves superior to the rest of mankind. This sovereign contempt which they have for all strangers, and
very

very high opinion of themselves, have made all commerce with them insupportable.

But turn your telescope towards the north, and behold a spectacle worthy of your curiosity. I did so; and, deceived by the weakness of my sight, cried out with astonishment, what do I see there! Oh fatal desolation! A city larger than all I have ever seen, swallowed up by the waves! What immense riches are there sunk to the bottom! How many miserable mortals have paid dearly for their rashness, in venturing to inhabit such a country as this!—Did I not tell you, interrupted ASTAROTH, that I would show you something worthy of your curiosity? But what augments the beauty of the prospect is this, that all you behold is nothing less real than what you imagine it to be. That city, which seems so enormously large, is only a collection of many cities that stand near each other, and which their vicinity, through the optic glass, makes you take for one continued series of building. The country, by its low situation, in many places lower than the surface of the water, looks at a distance as if it was drowned; yet it is in fact very far from being so. Before night comes I will carry you into this country, and give you some idea of the people who inhabit it. I have only one remark to make before we proceed on our journey. Direct your eye along the large street there, which faces this tower. Observe the great number of foreigners that are hastening towards the post office. He in the middle,

whose garments glitter with gold, is a marquis who has lately had the address to make himself master of near a million, which he is now going to secure in a privileged city, very commodious for those whom we devils protect. By only paying a very moderate fine, a public cheat may make a figure there at the expence of those he has duped through their credulity. There are two of these privileged cities in the country we are just ready to enter. The diverting histories they furnish us with are so very numerous, that I could have where-withal to entertain you with them as long as you had the patience to hear me : but there are many things to be previously considered, and we have at present no time to lose.

My infernal guide had no sooner finished these words, but he took me up like a pack upon his shoulders, and cleft the air with such velocity, that in less than two minutes he set me down in a large city, which he told me was the capital of several provinces, now united into one community. The prodigious hurry that seemed to reign throughout this flourishing city was to me the more surprising, as I had been taught, by the account of travellers, to look upon the natives of the whole country in no better light than the camels of Asia.—Forfake, said ASTAROTH, that error of yours ; we are now in that little spot of the globe, where industry is employed to the greatest advantage. Its inhabitants, a sort of amphibious people, are as much in their element by
sea

sea as by land. They regard no hazard where they have a prospect of getting riches, or of improving those they already enjoy. Every thing here is in motion; people of the-highest, as well as of the lowest rank, are all equally addicted to labour: even the greatest part of the women are capable of carrying on large negotiations. Do you not perceive, in every individual of both sexes, an almost incredible activity? Look at that building, on the back side of which is a representation of the divinity that presides there. It is the most frequented of all their temples; the place where they most regularly assemble, and where they assist with the greatest devotion. There are none of your men in black to be ever seen, who receive wages to teach people their duty: the divinity itself is their instructor, and they trust their own salvation entirely in their own hands. Every one acts according as he feels himself inspired. Let us enter into the sanctuary, and, if possible, make our way across this innumerable multitude of devotees. They are all so very busy that they will take no notice of us. Observe in what manner they behave, just as the love of interest animates all their actions. Nothing is capable of diverting them from this grand point.

But ASTAROTH, cried I, methinks the zeal of these fanaticks is like to cost me dear, unless you deliver me out of their hands. I feel myself elbowed on every side, and during the moment I have been here, am almost

squeezed to death. I seem as if I was in the midst of a mob of demoniacks, and I much question whether a mortal can suffer more in the place you are banished from.—Let us fly then, answered my guide, with all my heart; for really I am sick of being among people who are more turbulent than myself. We will take a turn in the chief parts of the city, where every thing looks with a smiling aspect. Observe those avenues, those canals, those curious buildings, and that universal propriety of all: these are entirely but so many fruits of the people's industry. This has carried them so far, that they may be said to have made an enchanted country of a place that was uninhabitable. They have even done more, chevalier. Weary of the yoke under which they lived, and which grew every day more insupportable, they found the secret, contrary to all human probability, to shake it off their shoulders, and arose to the highest degree of power, by means which seemed inevitably to threaten their destruction. But the persons who undertook, and accomplished such great actions, were not the very individual men you now see. The glory of such exploits is due only to a simple race of people, a people constant in their purposes, without luxury, enured to live on little, and to bear fatigues. They were the ancestors of a small part of those who now inhabit the country. But things are very much changed here within half a century past. The equitable laws introduced by the government, having drawn
hither

hither an infinite number of foreigners, luxury has likewise been brought in with them, and, thanks to our infernal sovereign, vice has now the predominancy here over virtue. Not but that there are still many men in the country truly great ; but virtue being no longer honoured here, any more than in most other parts of the world, their merit shines with no lustre, and is difficult to be discovered.

C H A P. VIII.

Sequel of the preceding : Conversations of the Author with ASTAROTH, concerning several persons, whom they meet by chance. They pass thro' divers cities. ASTAROTH is forced to take his flight into another country.

THE beauty of the place I was in, could not for some time satiate my eyes. However, as one grows weary by degrees of looking always on the same objects, ASTAROTH, who discovered my sentiments, informed me that I had seen every thing, for that there was no other difference among the cities but in their magnitude. What remains for me to give you an idea, of said he, and which will appear to you surprising, is the indolence of these very people,

ple, who at first sight appeared to you so active. One would be apt to think, by going to visit them at different times, that they had two souls, one of which was designed to moderate the turbulence of the other. You have seen the men in the place of their daily devotions: let us now enter the circles of their assemblies. Observe those two merchants who accost one another upon the bridge there. By the coldness with which they receive each other, would not you imagine that they were utter strangers, and that this is their first interview? All this while they are own brothers, who love one another sincerely, and mutually pay their visits every day. They are both invited into a circle of ladies, where they will pass away their irksome moments with incredible pleasure. Let us follow them without being seen. We are now in the hall, where you observe there are yet but few people. She who presides as mistress of the place, is a countrywoman of yours by birth; but having been educated here, she has acquired that insolent and formal gravity with which she salutes all that come to her assembly. But look at those four nymphs who are now coming up the steps. One would take them by their dress and manner to be actresses. Observe how all the gentlemen range themselves around their persons. Their beauty and lofty carriage enable them every day to make new conquests; yet the eldest of the four is now far advanced in her eighth lustre. The second follows closely at her heels; and neither
of

of them all has found the secret to fix one admirer. Their too haughty behaviour, even towards their equals, has drawn down on them a great number of enemies, who spare no pains to expose their faults, and sully their reputation.

See there comes up a fresh company. Remark that beauty richly clad, whom love has reduced to a very wan complexion. The gentleman who leads her is one of her brothers, and he to whom the father has entrusted the care of her conduct. The sprightly young pullet, who enjoys an elegant taste, has suffered herself to be charmed by the eloquence of a handsome young fellow, who wants neither learning nor merit. This modish lover is very assiduous in pursuit of his mistress, though he pants after her wealth more than her person: but the father of the fair, whose good fortune has made him forget his original, does not think fit to approve of this match. Without compassion he rigidly withstands the desires of his daughter, and by his invincible obstinacy makes her live a martyr to her passion. Yet all his precautions cannot hinder these tender lovers from holding a very strict correspondence together. There are some good souls who charitably lend an ear to their love, and serve them with great zeal. They see one another, they have an intercourse by letters; and the difficulties she meets with, far from discouraging the fair, do but help to heighten her flame. It is not, I must own, quite the
same

same with the young man: persuaded that he is altogether as good as his mistress, and that his birth and merit make sufficient amends for his want of riches, the contemptuous carriage of his future father-in-law begins already to make him cool, and he is in doubt whether to proceed or retire. Ere long he will abandon this fortune for an amiable young lady, who has more beauty, tho' less wealth, and whose family is more honourable and less haughty.

What! more new faces? cried I, seeing two beauties enter of an extraordinary figure, whose skin neither white, nor black, nor red, was of a colour that cannot be defined. Do they come to serve as foils to those lovely creatures they are placed by?— You are very right, replied ASTAROTH: it is purely an effect of malice that they are placed where you see them. They are countrymen of yours. They had for some years lived in their own province in very indifferent circumstances, when one of their nearest relations, who had heaped together a great deal of wealth under the protection of a rich uncle, had the generosity to send for them hither, and to put them into the plight which they now appear in. Like all other persons who are destitute of education, the change of their condition has almost turned their brains. Their behaviour is so very haughty, that they are grown insupportable to all about them. Not a soul in the world loves them, and they are admitted into some publick assemblies, merely out of regard to their relations.

Now

Now they bring in the hot water for the ladies, and pipes for the gentlemen. This scene deserves your attention. The order the ladies are ranged in round the table, is worthy to be admired, while the gentlemen stand behind them, and blow the smoke into their faces with a comic gravity. What is the meaning of this profound silence? said I to ASTAROTH: Are they going to celebrate some mystery?—Not in the least, answered he; they are silent for no other reason but because they have nothing to say. But this silence will not be of long duration. That superannuated beauty, who is the mistress of the house, is terribly enraged with her servants, and is going to open the conversation with most bitter complaints; after which every one will pity her without knowing what she has said. Here come the cards, and the tables are ready for the players: they will be all fixed till nine o'clock at night; so let us retire, to avoid the irksome task of being obliged to keep them company.

Have you any curiosity, said he, as we came out of this place, to see some of the assemblies of men? You must first inform me, replied I, whether they are any better worth seeing than the assembly we have been in; for till then I can give you no direct answer.—I can assure you, said he, that they are much worse. You will see nothing there, properly speaking, but a parcel of joint stools, with creatures sitting on them, some at play, others smoaking, others drinking, others quarrelling together, or calumniating

calumniating the absent, or arguing without a grain of common sense. I know enough of these matters, said I, already, not to expose myself to the mortification of being an ocular witness of such stupidities.. A walk will be much more agreeable and amusing: let us take a turn this way. I see a fallow complexion coming towards us at a distance, and would gladly know who it is. The pensive air of the man denotes him full of projects. Whether is he running in such a monstrous hurry? He is running, answered ASTAROTH, to an auction just by, in order to buy cheap what he will sell afterwards at an exorbitant price. That fellow would sacrifice father and mother for a single ducat. Intriguing to the last degree, he knows how to make somewhat of every thing. As he is but a bad musician, he tries every means to make amends for this want of skill in his calling. He is become a broker, a usurer, a sharpening gamester, and has a thousand other different trades, associated with a woman as crafty as himself, both their aims are directed to the same end. He has found the secret however to get five hundred ducats out of this woman, who has made him give her a bond for it, with which she keeps him in awe. Being thus obliged to treat her with respect, he slavishly submits to all she requires of him. It is not long ago that the old hag, having determined to arrest a man who owed her money, made our musician submit to the mean employment of a setter. By her order
he

he went to the man that was to be ensnared, and learned from him the precise time in which he intended to go abroad. He was not in the least suspected, and therefore executed his commission with ease and address, securing their prey to the bailiffs, who were in pursuit of him.— Such a man as this, said I, without question, is doomed for an inhabitant of one of the most gloomy regions in all Tartarus. — Do not deceive yourself, Chevalier, replied ASTAROTH; but believe that the actions of mortals are weighed in our empire with the most scrupulous equity. Every one there is treated according to his deserts, and such a man as that, whose picture I have now given a sketch of, will undoubtedly be employed to torment the souls of others. We hate him as much there, as you do here, and his fate will be to continue busy and miserable, without intermission.

Let us turn our eyes from such an object. I see a little deformed man, whose character I want to make you acquainted with. Do you not perceive some resemblance between his person and mine? There is yet more affinity between our characters. He is a serpent in human form, whose venomous tongue spares no mortal. It is true indeed that he is grown somewhat more discreet of late, since a certain adventure that happened to him, and which he will never forget as long as he lives. He was on a journey, in pursuit of his own mercantile affairs, when coming one day to an

Z

inn

inn, where the conversation of the company turned upon the genius of different nations, he took it in his head to speak of the Swiss in the most injurious terms. A Grison officer, who sat at the same table with him, had the patience to hear him for above two hours, without making a word of answer. It was now late at night : the company separated, and our little man, entirely satisfied with his own eloquence, went to bed as well as the rest. Far from thinking he had brought an *enemy* upon his back, he was sleeping with great tranquillity, when just at day-break, he was awaked by certain taps at his chamber door. He got up, and opened it : but how great was his surprise, to see the officer standing without, who told him very politely, and in extreme good French, that he looked upon him to be a gentleman, and that he was come, as a member of the Swiss's republick, to demand satisfaction for the extravagant words which he had uttered the evening before, against the whole body of his nation ? In vain did the merchant make use of all his eloquence to get himself out of this scrape : the officer would listen to no other sort of reparation, but that which he demanded as a gentleman. Neither prayers nor tears, tho' vented on his knees, could abate the just anger of this military patriot ; who still persisted in his first demand, till at last, longer any having no other room to doubt that he had to deal with the most cowardly of mankind, he saw he had no remedy but the chastisement

tisement of the cane, which he inflicted with the greatest severity. The vigorous application of this instrument of revenge, made the other cry out in a very pleasant manner. All the guests that lodged that night in the same inn, wakened by the shrill sound of his voice, came running to the place, and arrived time enough to be witnesses of the diverting spectacle, the punishment which his last night's impertinence had brought on him. Pity at last relieved him out of the hands of the enemy, and he thought himself happy in getting so well off, without pretending to any retaliation. The shame of such a cudgelling, prevented his doing any more business in this country, and he took the prudent step to quit it without delay. He rode post home, persuaded that the adventure could not have blown thither before his arrival, and that then he might contest the truth of it when it came to be reported. Full of this thought, scarce had he been an hour come to town, but he made his appearance at a coffee-house, the most frequented of any in this country. Without observing that every one was surprised at his entrance, and more so at his gay and tranquil air; What news have you, gentlemen? said he; addressing himself to several persons that he had just payed his respects to. Here is the gazette, Sir, answered one of the company; take it and read. In the article from Frankfort, you will find a piece of news that a little concerns yourself. In a word, the story was there admirably well.

told, with all its circumstances. There was nothing more wanting to strike him with confusion. He remained dumb and motionless : and having, in this manner, sustain'd the laughter of the whole company a full quarter of an hour, he retired with the utmost disorder, and at the very brink of distraction. Since this time, tho' his real character be the same, it is observed that he takes more care whom he speaks before, as well as what he says. How many men are there, who might receive great good from such a wholesome correction.

Look at that man who now salutes him : you may call him the second tome of the same book. As he had his education under a woman, his chief occupation is calumny, and he has been used from his infancy to speak ill of all mankind, as well those whom he knows, as those he does not know. Some days ago, being at the play, he pointed out a young lady with his finger, and amused himself with a friend who was very much like him, at her expences. Unhappily he was overheard by a gentleman who had a love for the lady, and had withal no taste of raillery. He made our laughter come to him between the seats of the theatre, under pretence of having something of importance to whisper in his ear. The compliment he made him was just the same as the Swiss officer had made in Germany ; and it was received in much the same manner, with very mean excuses. But his enemy presently lost all patience, and attacked him fiercely with sandy cuffs in the face, till he laid him sprawling
at

at his feet, and so diverted the whole audience with a very tragi-comical scene.

But what, said I, became of the young man after such an affront? Did he leave the city; or was the honour of the other repaired by some satisfaction proportionable to the insult? Neither one nor the other, Sir, replied *ASTAROTH*; the matter passed off in silence with regard to him; only some persons, who had no concern in the affair, made themselves merry with it a long time after, at the expence of the poor sufferer. It has been said however since, that this correction was not sufficient to suppress the venom of his tongue; for that having sucked in slander with his milk, his malady was become incurable. If we had time to traverse the whole city, and examine every individual, with whose character I could entertain you, it would find us a good deal of employment. Remark that chariot which is driven on a full trot, and comes along by the side of us. The nymph within it is a good-natured beauty, who has given up her honour, with very little discretion, to the gentleman who sits by her. He is going into a country he is acquainted with, where she will very soon be relieved from a periodical tympany, that begins to make some noise in the city. Six weeks absence will make her a thorough virgin again, when she will return to her lodging with as much innocent confidence as the most chaste vestal in the world could be mistress of. Very few persons however will be deceived by this deportment: a jealous old maid has

discovered the secret, and deals it about to all her neighbours: the affair will soon become public; but miss, who has a good deal of wit, will laugh it off, and go on in her old way.

Let us stand on one side, and make room for that coach. The person it carries is an officer of distinction, who is hastening to dishonour himself for ever, by a proceeding that will be altogether as prejudicial to him as inconsiderate. Distracted at the infidelity of a very rich wife, whom he married only for her fortune, he gives himself up entirely to his passion, and is resolved to expose his disgrace to the eye of the public. Let us follow him with all speed: and see! we are come to the end of our journey. The Magistrates are here within, and the lady stands accused of bestowing part of her favours on one of her footmen. Now they enter her chamber, and have sufficient evidence of the crime: but madam, you hear, brazens it out. Pleased that her rascally lover has found means to escape, she knows, that for her own part, a few months imprisonment is the worst they can inflict on her. Thus all the dishonour will fall on her husband, who will have time to repent at leisure the imprudent step he now takes in such a hurry.

ASTAROTH, said I, you speak of this affair in a mighty ludicrous manner. What, because an honest man has the misfortune to marry a debauched woman, is he to be disgraced for the ill conduct of his wife? Does equity countenance such a senseless custom as this?

this? -What can equity do? answered my quondam HERMIT. It is an established rule in most countries of the world; and which neither justice nor reason has force enough to abolish. There is only one way of avoiding a disgrace of this nature, and that your country-men are the only people who know, or at least who practise. They have eyes and see not, or pretend however not to see, and thus prevent the publication of their disgrace by never complaining of their misfortune.

Take a view of that rich burgher, who is now entering his house. He is a venerable member of an assembly that was instituted with the highest wisdom; but, thanks to my diabolical brethren, he is now entirely fallen from all that once made him the object of respect. Not many years ago he got his bread by his hammer; since when, having found an opportunity to get into the mercantile way, fortune has favoured him in such a manner, that he is become one of the richest men in the whole republic. His felicity, I must own, has not been uninterrupted. His wife, a coquet of the first rate, has made him swallow many a bitter pill; but he, like a prudent man, always took the most probable measures for hiding his misfortune from the eyes of the world. He had even succeeded, if his wife, more crafty than himself, had not feigned a dreadful cholick, just at the very moment when they were to set out on a long country journey. The fatal sisters, since that, have cut the thread of her debaucheries, and her wealthy widower lives perfectly
at

at ease, and respected by all those who pay their worship to fortune.

But tell me, said I, what is this body of people, of which I now make one myself?— This, answered ASTAROTH, is called a very wise assembly, tho' most of the members of it have neither wit nor judgment, but are blinded by their passions, and act only with a view to their interest, or from caprice, or sometimes agreeably to the solicitation of their wives. He who presides among them is usually a very venerable man, but one who is respected only in appearance, and no farther attended to than his opinions are conformable to those of the ignorant wretches he is obliged to propose them to, who even acted as if they vied with each other who should thwart him the most: so much does pride predominate in this august body. For the most part, indeed, it is composed of men who understand commerce, but whose knowledge leads them no farther. As they know the whole knot of them to be chosen only out of regard to their fortune, they think of nothing but aggrandizing themselves, without taking any trouble to acquire those qualities that are requisite, in order to fill up with dignity the function of their high officer, which requires great capacity and penetration.

My dear ASTAROTH, said I, will you please to let me have a view of some of these assemblies. I should take a delight in hearing some cases of conscience decided by men who know nothing more than the current value of foreign coin. Their sentiments, I imagine, must

must vary, like the public stocks among brokers. —What you desire, said ASTAROTH, is indeed a very humourous piece of diversion; but I reserve it for another opportunity. At present we have not a minute to lose, because it is high time we were at the most famous place of the whole country. I would have you present at the funeral solemnity of one of the most amiable subjects that has for a long time arrived in our empire. I made him no reply, but followed him with all expedition, and we made such haste as to be at our journey's end time enough to satisfy our curiosity.

The first thing my Devil did, was to lead me into a house so infected, that the very smell struck me down on the floor. Even ASTAROTH, for his part, little delicate as he was, owned himself unable to bear the stench. This house held the dead carcase of the person who had brought us hither. Whoever the subject be, cried I, I had much rather leave my curiosity ungratified, than run the risque of getting any contagious distemper. — This infection, answered ASTAROTH, proceeds only from their having, by direction from a Jew, opened the corpse to embalm it. Tho' the wretch was rotting to pieces even before the departure of her soul, the person who now takes so much care of her funeral doated on her. Let us go to this house, which is just by, and I will conduct you quite to his own apartment. Would you not think, by the grief you see him in, that his loss was irreparable? Yet all this lamentation is only
for

for a paultry actress, who play'd her part indeed effectually with him, abridged him of his domesticks at pleasure, and sold him her favours only for ready money. Now he is deprived of her, his riches seem to be a burthen to him, and his life, for the future, will be one continued scene of uneasiness. All his enjoyments are utterly blasted, and he permits nobody to see him but flatterers, who have the complaisance to bewail his misfortunes, and dwell on the virtues of his lascivious mistress. See that old man that comes in this moment: he is the most celebrated poet of your nation, and has been enticed hither by the bounties of our wealthy mourner. His business is to pay the compliment of condolance, which he accompanies with an elegy, that, tho' it be very languid and jejune, and much below his other writings, will be better paid for than his best pieces. He who follows him is a musician no less famous, who comes to raise contribution on the Israelite, for the present of a Madrigal, that he has got writ for him, and to which he himself has composed an air. As this little piece is extremely suitable to the circumstances the Jew is now in, he is not ashamed to set a price on it himself, and will really get the whole sum he demands.

But who is he that comes in with so gay an air, that one would be apt to think his only business was to insult the affliction of the good-natured Israelite? That, said ASTAROTH, is another poet, a man of great reputation, but of so frank and open a deportment, that he cannot dissemble.

dissemble. He could not submit to make any advantage of this opportunity, and his natural politeness is the only motive of his coming hither, where he will receive nothing but empty thanks for his candid compliment.—Hah, replied I, I know that charming poet: he is the very flower of all our wits, and we want nobody now here but the hero of Parnassus, that universal genius, and mode of good taste.—I easily comprehend, said my very good guide, whom you speak of. He has just been to get himself puffed in the gazette, and is this moment, you shall see, coming into the city: let us go and meet him. But, adds my metamorphosed devil, as he came out of the Israelite's house, it were to be wished, for his sake, that all persons of understanding were of your opinion. They would not then lessen his good qualities, by attributing to him certain bad ones, that are usually found only in folks of my species, or in those who are thought the most to resemble us. What do you imagine he is coming here to do? His business is, without well concerting his scheme, to bite a bookseller more crafty than himself, to whom he has sold a manuscript that he wants to get out of his hands again. Observe how he proceeds.—I perceive already, said I, that the bookseller refuses him.—His pretended design, continued ASTAROTH, is to make some corrections to the advantage of the work: yet the suspicious shopkeeper is afraid to trust him, and does it only on the condition that he shall write
them

them on the spot, without taking the copy away. His petulant genius, which does not give him time to think, makes him accept the proposition. See him at work there : but what do you think he is doing ? He erases all the best parts of the book, and supplies them with a few puerilities that have neither sense nor connexion. He has finished his design, and observe how pleased he seems. Now he jokes with his bookseller, and has the indiscretion to confess what he has done. Do but observe those two ironical faces ! Who ever beheld such a bookseller ? He returns his thanks to the impertinent author with as much complaisance, as if he had writ the finest things in the world. He solemnly protests, that whatever he may be pleas'd to say, for his own part he is so very sensible of the excellence of his alterations, that he will put the copy to press directly, and print it with them as soon as possible. The poet goes out : but see, he has not got ten yards before a sudden reflection makes him stop. He perceives his own blunder, and considers that what he has done is as contrary to his reputation, as to his honour. He turns back observe ; but it is now too late. The fault is committed, and the merciless bookseller will not listen to any accommodation. Several persons of distinction shall for a long while use their interest in vain : the author will stoop to any thing to obtain his desire ; but all will end only in his own confusion, and the triumph of his bookseller.

But

But whether is he now going? He seems, methinks, to meditate some secret journey. I have it now. He is to set out incognito this evening for a neighbouring province, in order to engage the gazette printer to insert in his news a stanza of a piece that he is himself extremely fond of, but which the criticks will universally condemn. Let us keep all the way at his heels; and see, we are already at the printing-house, where our author addresses himself in the most obliging terms, to his very good friend the gazetteer. He tells him, that he enjoys a sensible pleasure in his correspondence, that his letters are the most spirited he receives from any body, and that his paper is the best digested of any now in vogue: in a word, well knowing the man he has to deal with, he honours him at last with the title of learned, though he does not even know what the belles-lettres mean, and is ignorant of the very situation of those places he is obliged to mention in his hebdomadal sheet. Observe the fawning sycophant! Why does he not tell him, in the same breath, that he is a very handsome fellow, and quite genteel? But, such a plain truth as that will give the gazetteer no extraordinary pleasure. He loves flattery, especially from a wit, and upon the subject of his own parts. Now he promises all that the author requires of him; and to-morrow he will advertise, that this stanza is the last of many which have been sent to the court of a young king, and most graciously received by the hopeful

A a

monarch!

monarch.—But what, says I, signifies a newspaper puff? Will the public, do you think, give credit to it? The public! answered my guide: a very pretty jest indeed! Do you not know the public to be a subtle old fox, that is not so easily taken? The connisseurs will penetrate the whole secret, as well as if I had spread it myself: and no more will be gathered from it, than that the gazetteer is the poet's friend; but as to the goodness of the piece, that time must determine. You and I however may pronounce the mean while, that the printed stanza is not worth a farthing, and that if the rest of the ode be no better, it will appear that, from an excellent poet, the *sieur TOLVAIRE* is become a mere versifier.

By what I perceive, said I to *ASTAROTH*, the poet you speak of is not much in your favour. But happily for him, you lie under the imputation of having a very depraved taste. Your judgment will never prevail against that of a monarch, who is celebrated all over Christendom for an exquisite judgment, and who, they say, has lately honoured our author with a letter under his own hand, full of the most obliging testimonies of esteem and good-will. Have you read the epistle which the *sieur de TOLVAIRE* has just now addressed to his majesty in return? Can any one say with justice, that it degenerates from the beauty of his other poems? Yet this was his last work; and all impartial persons must therefore conclude from

from it, that his muse has not abandoned him, as his antagonists would fain make us believe.

Where are your thoughts now, my dear Chevalier? replied ASTAROTH. The piece you talk of is the most bunglingly conceived that can possibly be imagined: the poet, when he composed it, must have been destitute of all common sense. Who but he ever undertook to praise a son at the expence of a father's reputation whom he loved, and whose memory is yet dear in his eyes? What idea must TOLVAIRE have of the prince whom he flatters in this manner? Does he think to enhance the virtues of the new monarch by treating his father as avaritious, unjust, and cruel? It is not my private judgment, Chevalier, that can do any prejudice to the reputation of the poet you speak of: but the opinion of all people of taste must weigh something, and they conspire to regard this epistle as the very tomb of common sense. It has accordingly been treated with the contempt it deserves: his inconsiderate zeal has made him at once lose all the monarch's esteem. He now owns the blunder that has for ever precluded him from the presence of this prince: but what grieves him the most, is to see himself frustrated of a very considerable gratuity, which he depended on receiving. His enemies triumph on this occasion: I will shew you one little piece, writ by a poet, remarkable for his natural vein of humour, whom perhaps you will know by his stile. Read here,

A a 3

fir,

fir, said he : at the same time giving me a paper, upon which the following verses were written.

Why, faith, TOLVAIRE is a great man :
 Roman or Greek, deny't who can !
 For talents, none will find his equal,
 In times elaps'd, or in the sequel.
 Inspir'd he raves in lofty metre,
 And seems all wild-fire and salt-petre :
 Nor epigram, nor epick strain,
 Can tire his muse, or give her pain.
 For hist'ry he was ne'er to seek :
 He writes a tragedy per week.
 With heaps of philosophic letters,
 Sent in all countries to his betters,
 All vastly learn'd and writ in verse,
 He tricks up science, trite and terse:
 Poet, historian, politician,
 Merchant, bookseller, and physician,
 Comedian, usurer, and wit,
 What is there but TOLVAIRE can hit?
 In NEWTON deep, he knows not why,
 He measures light, defines the eye :
 Of every thing the undertaker,
 Turns deist, empirick, and quaker.
 His new poetique we expect,
 Clear, comprehensive, and correct.
 Great judge of taste, for public profit,
 He lately form'd a goddess of it,
 And clapp'd her in a shrine more odd
 Than ever held a heathen god.

Religion,

Religion, government, respect,
He treats with scorn, and great neglect.
Lock'd up for his poetic licence,
(The Regent could not bear his fly sense)
Sustain'd, expos'd to footmen's laughter,
A bastinading thesis—after.
Puff'd up with these strong caustic lawrels,
For greater honours now he quarrels;
A new CAPENEUS, 'ere his time,
Attacks a mortal god in rhyme.
With such a prince to make a rout,
Whose elogy will live without,
And wants no sounding Hebrew name!
But I have quite worn out my theme,
And must conclude, say all we can,
That, faith, TOLVAIRE is a great man.

Well, said ASTAROTH, after having given me time to examine this piece of satire, what do you think of our panegyrick? Who do you imagine to be the author of it?—If it be not ASTAROTH himself, said I, I am really incapable of judging. Your panegyrick, as you call it, is a very master-piece of ill-nature, and could be dictated only from some very just occasion of resentment, or by a malignant turn of temper that would not be pardonable in a mortal. But, what, added I, is the meaning of your bastinading thesis, that TOLVAIRE sustained, exposed to the laughter of footmen? It is only, said he, an allusion to a trifling adventure, which is common enough among poets, whom the muses never inspire with prudence.

dence. He was obliged to pay a small penalty for a fine satirical stroke on the chevalier de ROHAN ; that was all. The chevalier had no taste of raillery, and did not think it would become him to fight a duel with a poet, whom he had seen a page not many years before : so he contented himself with giving up TOLVAIRE to a good liberal drubbing, which his footmen inflicted, himself standing by to see the operation. This historical anecdote, tho' of long standing, could not, you see, escape the memory of an animated enemy. I am even surpris'd that he did not add to the qualities of mr de TOLVAIRE the title of smuggler ; for you cannot but know the accident that happened to him a little while ago, with regard to some pictures that he was going to send out of one country into another without paying the duties. Certainly, answered I, that adventure is known to all the world : but it no otherwise concerns the public than just to expose the avarice of the poet. Observe him now rising, and paying his respects to the company. What is the meaning of that precipitation ? Is any important affair come into his head, which obliges him to run away so abruptly ?

Ah ! Chevalier, replied my instructor, one may easily perceive you are no poet, and that you do not so much as know what a poet is.

A poet, sir, is a kind of heteroclite animal, a very odd machine, composed of enthusiasms, and which moves almost always by fits and starts. He comes and goes, is in a hurry,
or

or quite indolent, often without knowing for what reason, or without thinking of what he is about. He before you, pleased with having obtained his desire, is impatient to be gone into another place. His bookseller's trick still runs in his head: for tho' he had been used himself to deceive others, the stratagem of this citizen surpasses his subtle imagination. He designs to pay him another visit, and make use of fresh artifices: let him go by himself. We may find him again when we have a mind to it; that is, after I have made you acquainted with several other persons that I perceive in this city.

He who passes along before us, and whose white hair gives him a venerable aspect, is a philosophical merchant, who gilds over all his actions with an affected sanctity, which has acquired him much reputation among a certain species of men. To hear him talk, one would say that charity to his neighbour was the *primum mobile* of all his actions: yet he never lends a halfpenny but upon good pledges, which he usually keeps; and sometimes his zeal carries him so far, that he writes against the reputation of persons, whom he knows only upon the testimony of certain hypocrites, who impose on his pious credulity. Blinded by interest, his governing passion, he lately took it in his head to write a panegyrick on usury. According to his sentiments, grinding the face of the poor is become a holy work, meritorious in the man who does it, and what will the most infallibly conduct him to heaven. This system
of

of his has indeed drawn on his back all the honest men that know him : but, too proud to acknowledge his fault, and too much under our direction even to see it, he obstinately persists to maintain his enormous proposition, and spends whole days and nights in collecting together authorities to insert in his writings, that may at least render it probable. That shining countenance that now approaches him with respect, is a mere spendthrift, who imposes on our usurer, and all his sect. Forced to fly his country for having wasted the revenue of the prince who employed him, he had the good luck to take refuge in these provinces, where he found the secret of getting in with the heads of these dealers in money, and interesting them in his misfortune. It is a pleasure, Chevalier, to see with what address he plucks them. I must own indeed, at the same time, that he is very serviceable to their whole cabal, as well by his interest in his own country, as by some secret correspondencies, which enable him to introduce prohibited books into foreign parts. Of all disguises, there is none more advantageous than the mask of devotion. A cheat that makes a judicious use of it, may represent all sorts of characters, and be sure of as many dupes as he converses with honest people.

Look at that troop of humble prim physiognomies : it is a collection of monks and friars, of ecclesiasticks and seculars, who all together compose a body of mountebanks, that formerly cut out work enough for their masters, but
cannot

cannot at present tell what course to take. Would one not imagine from their affable aspects, that they were a very docile sort of people? Yet is there nothing more arrogant than these cabalists. Ostentation is the very rule they go by. Under the affected outside of a matchless modesty, they conceal a pride which persuades them that they are infallible in their decisions, and much more able men than their superiors. Beyond these defamatory libels, are a set of malignant capmen, who inveigh against the most venerable persons. Happy in being born with brilliant and subtle genius's, they had well nigh carried on their point against their antagonists. These latter could fly only with one wing, when the death of a pious man, of the society of mountebanks, made them commit such extravagancies that have at last unmasked them.

Look at that full-chested young man, and observe how pale, meagre, and disfigured he appears. Scarce has he strength to set one foot before the other. But a few years ago he was one of the finest genius's in Europe, and the most familiarly acquainted with polite literature. He was, in a word, the delight of all men of taste : but being unhappily the son of an enthusiast, he has taken it in his head to follow his father's precepts of divinity. Fasts and other austerities have so impaired his health, that he is little less than guilty of voluntary self-murder. Yet, weak as he is, if you were to see him upon the stage of our mountebanks, you
would

would be equally surpris'd at his agility and his strength. He will leap you six foot high, and four of the strongest men are not capable of holding him down. O wonder of wonders! the utmost effort of his diabolical majesty's utmost art. How many foolish souls swallow the hook every day, and take for a divine work a mere tragical operation, a mere illusion of the prince of devils! This is one of the subjects that I propose in time to let you thoroughly into, and concerning which I have many surprising particulars to tell you.

But how, said I, shall we find any agreement between fasts and austerities, and tragical operations?—Will you be always thus simple? replied *ASTAROTH*. Do you not know that there must be a semblance of virtue to gain the populace, and secure the confidence of honest citizens? Besides, fanaticism is a distemper that makes more ravage than the plague. Tho' there are a great many hypocrites amongst those mountebanks, there may be also some found, who, seduced by enthusiasm, act with sincerity, and from an involuntary impulse. That large lean fellow is one of this number. He has sacrificed riches, honours, friends, and even reason itself, for the glory of the sect. But it is quite otherwise with that plump red-faced lad, with a demure countenance. That is our faithful and dear friend *Le GILOTIN*. Prompted too far by his turbulent spirit, he was obliged some years ago to leave France, in order to escape the punishment

nishment due to his intrigues, which were more mercenary than cabalistic. He was then the very humble factor of the mountebanks, a calling the profits of which were not equivalent to the hazards. All that he acquired therefore was poverty; and at his arrival in this country he looked like a very skeleton: his ragged robes declared his misery to be most deplorable; he had not even shoes to his feet. In this plight he moved the compassion of some tender-hearted people. Certain devout souls, who go to heaven for printing invectives against others, admitted him into the number of their domesticks; and his intriguing genius soon advanced him. He became the head servant of the printing-house, and knew so well how to make a good use of his post, that he printed numbers of books for himself at his master's expence. The mask of hypocrisy for a long time protected him: but at last, the eyes of his superiors were opened, the fraud was attested, and poor GILLOTIN was turned out of doors, tho' with more indulgence than was due to his ungrateful crimes. Happily for him, he had already got together a good sum of money; and, little concerned at what the world say of him, he pursued at his own charge what he had begun at the charge of his masters: set up a printing house for himself, and gradually rose upon their ruin. His intriguing genius carries him thro' every thing: he begins already to grow rich; and there is no doubt but in a little time he will be one of the first men of his profession

feſſion. I have many things to tell you concerning him: but a ſuperior power obliges me to leave you. I cannot ſtay a moment. Farewell! You ſhall ſee me again ſoon, when perhaps you may find me more diverting than you have hitherto done.

As he ſpoke theſe words, ASTAROTH diſappeared, without giving me time to make him any answer, or letting me know how long it would be before he returned.

FINIS.



Printed by CHARLES JEPHSON in *Wine*
Office Court, Fleet Street.